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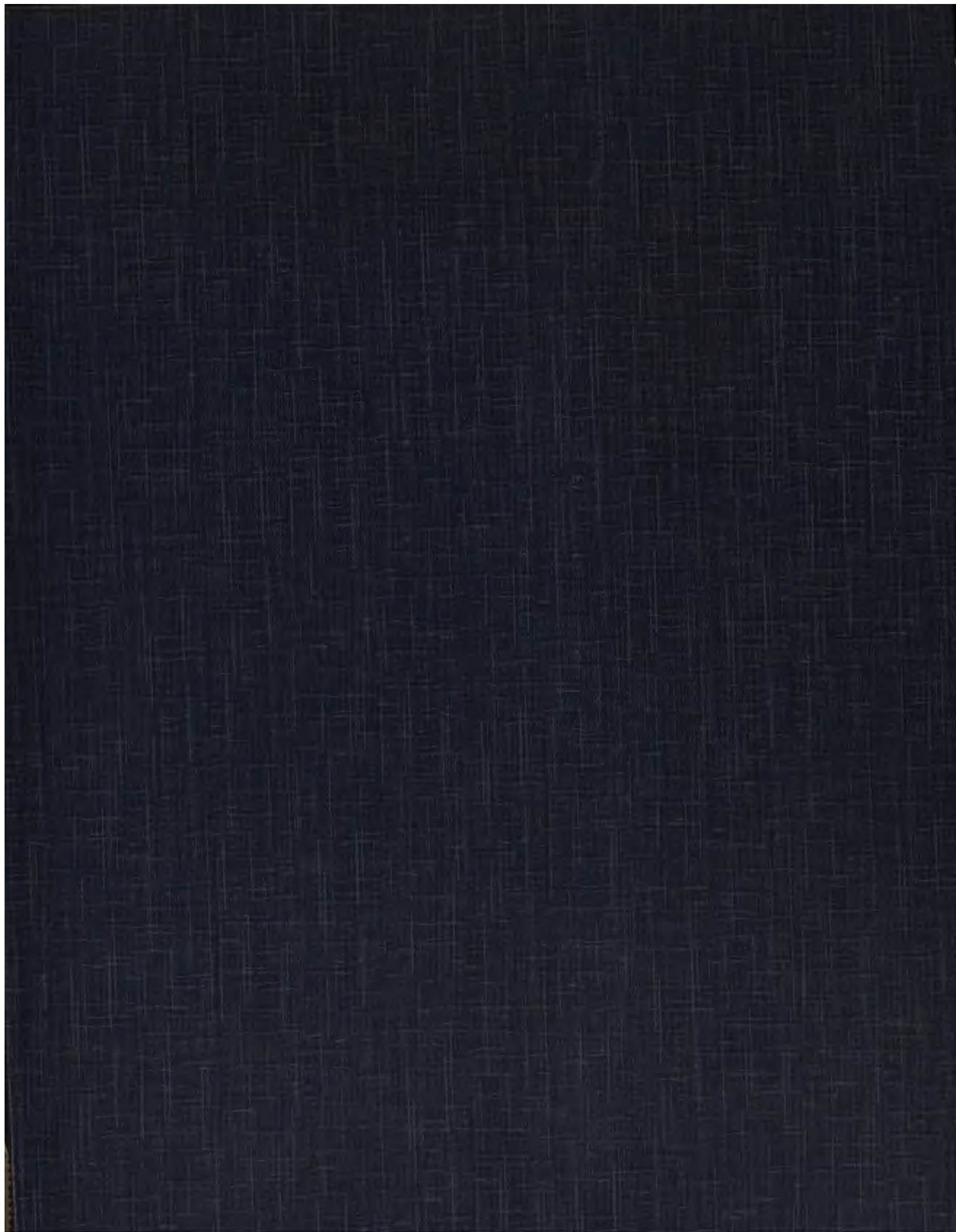
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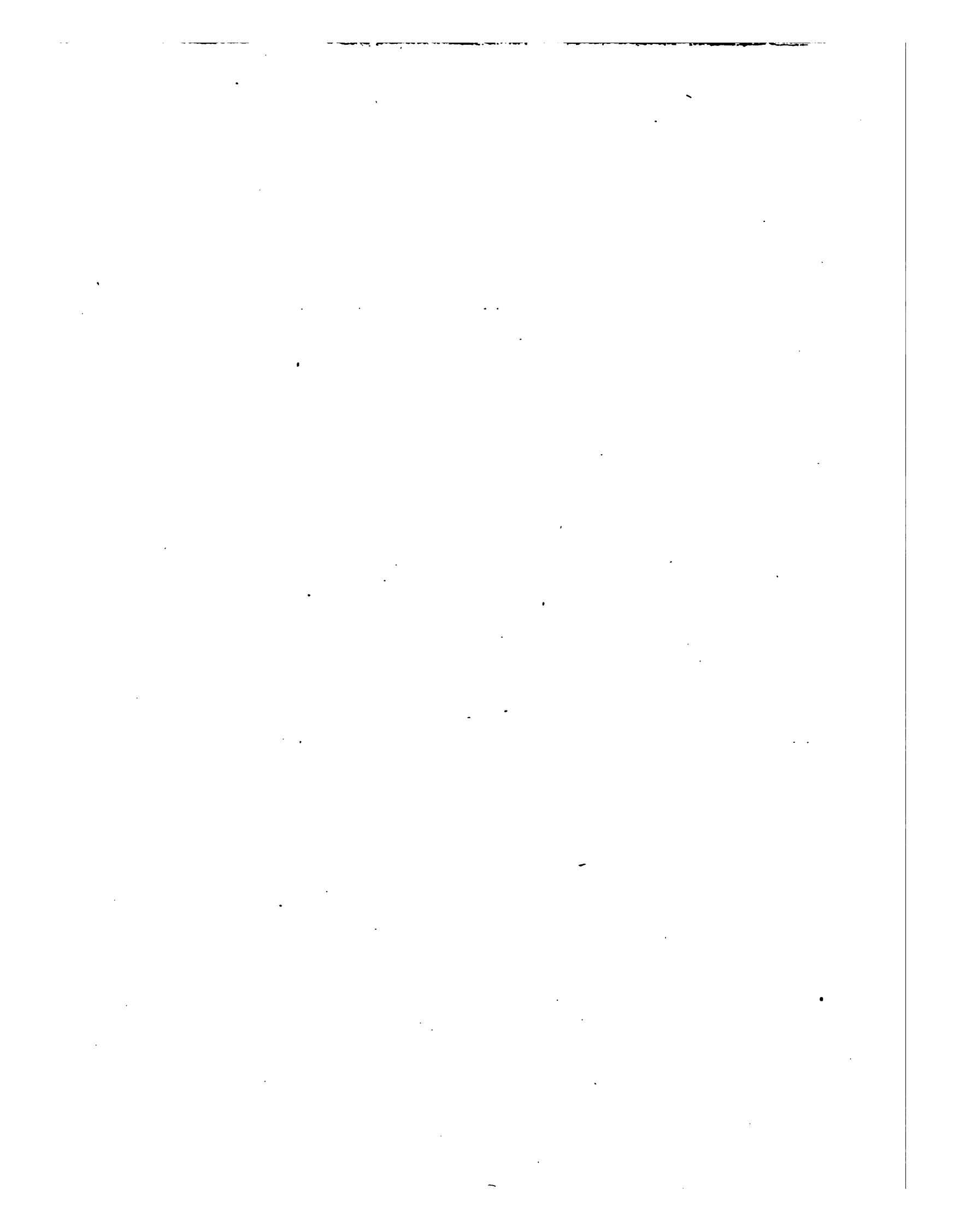
THE LOVES

OF

ALBERT AND AGNES.

A POEM,

In four Books.







Designed by W. H. Edwards London Lane, Weymouth

BROOMHOLME PRIORY.

Drawn by H. H. Edwards

BROOMHOLME PRIORY,

OR

THE LOVES

OF

ALBERT AND AGNES.

A POEM,

In Four Books.

AH ME! FOR AUGHT THAT EVER I COULD READ,
COULD EVER HEAR BY TALE OR HISTORY,
THE COURSE OF TRUE LOVE NEVER DID RUN SMOOTH.

A Midsummer Night's Dream.



PRINTED BY J. PARLEE, FOR T. HURST, PATERNOSTER-ROW,

London.

MDCCCI.



THE
AUTHOR'S APOLOGY.
TO
THE READER.

DARE I! who ne'er have felt the magic wand,
Which bright-ey'd Genius with benignant hand
Complacent waves o'er some, and gives the wreath,
That laurel-wreath, whose bloom survives our death;
Dare I unknown, launch forth my little bark, 5
On the world's stormy sea, whose bosom's dark
With wrecks by wayward destiny consign'd
To all the fury of the threat'ning wind?
Dare I, in view of all the low'ring storms,
Which haunt mortality in various forms, 10
With eye undaunted brave the critic's frowns?
Hear censure murm'ring truths my candour owns?
This knowledge *felt*, shall I abash'd retreat?
Or, trembling face the foe, and danger meet?

In

In doubt I stand—But some fair form I spy, 15
Beaming with radiance on my tearful eye
Bedeck'd in smiles she comes, and HOPE her name,
She says, “ Ne'er fix thy daring eyes on Fame,
“ Her clarion trump must breathe a Homer's fire ;
“ She weeps when death has broke a Shakspeare's lyre, 20
“ Pope's sweetest melody must bribe her tongue,
“ And Dryden yield those themes which she has sung ;
“ To her thou must not look to sound thy name,
“ For she thy bold presumption would proclaim
“ With justice due ; but if no ill' design 25
“ To stab the heart of Virtue marks thy line,
“ If thou dost feel mild Pity's soothing wing
“ To fan thy mind, and bid thee plaintive sing
“ Some melting tale that will draw forth a sigh,
“ Fetch an instinctive tear from sorrow's eye ; 30
“ Then offer to the world thy artless song,
“ I'll try to soften e'en the critic's tongue ;
“ I too will own the fault as mine alone,
“ Youth pleads thy pardon, youth to error prone ;
“ But if condemn'd—thy first attempt should fail, 30
“ Tho' the world frown and at thy folly rail,
“ Tell

(vii)

“ Tell them 'twas HOPE, that urg'd thee once to try,
“ Tell them 'twas HOPE, that check'd thy rising sigh.”

These words I heard, I felt their opiate balm,
Shed o'er my trembling soul a soothing calm; 40
Should all I dread—be found alas *too true*,
Should I convinc'd *too late*, have cause to rue
The bold attempt—forgive my erring quill;
A woman pleads, oh! criticism be still,
Nor pluck the bandage from thy falcon's eye, 45
Where but a timid nestling learns to fly.



BROOMHOLME

1940



BROOMHOLME PRIORY.

Book the First.

ARGUMENT.

THE poem opens with a description of the castle of Rodolpho—his character and that of his daughter Agnes—his intention of going to the holy wars—reflections on those wars—Rodolpho calls Agnes to take leave of her—his agitation at her filial tenderness—the progress of parental love—Rodolpho's advice to Agnes—he acquaints her with his intention of marrying her at his return to Godfrey, whom she dislikes—his departure—reflections on the abuse of parental authority—the joys of mutual love—Agnes's sorrow—she seeks relief in friendship—the happiness of a cottager's life—Agnes calmed by time wishes for her father's return in the hope that she might be able to induce him to change his intention—a storm in the night—Agnes calls up the domestics—description of them impressed with fear—Albert discovered wounded by a fall—Agnes affected by it—he is attended during his illness by the order of Agnes—she visits him—their mutual love—he acquaints Godfrey who is his uncle therewith—interview between Godfrey, Albert and Agnes—Godfrey commands Albert to go to his castle—the parting scene between Albert and Agnes.

ON Norfolk's plains an ancient castle stood,
Proud in its height, the floating cloud it woo'd;
Its lofty turrets capt with misty veils,
Seem'd to the gazing eye like lefs'ning fails;

B

Its

Its walls would sternly on the traveller frown, 5
 And for the laurel wore the ivy crown,
 Which grateful for the preference, had shed
 Its verdant foliage round its nurse's head;
 A stagnant moat o'ergrown with rushes wild,
 To its damp side the timid snipe beguil'd; 10
 A huge portcullis in the gate was swung,
 A deep ton'd bell was at the portal hung;
 Around the castle reign'd an awful gloom,
 The owl sole inmate was of many a room,
 Her hollow shrieks would echo on the ear, 15
 Thrill ev'ry sense and waken ev'ry fear;
 Pleasure with memory frail had long forgot,
 To glance her sunbeams on this dreary spot.

Yet in this castle bloom'd a virgin young,
 A subject worthy of the poet's tongue; 20
 Her rip'ning charms with gradual display,
 Promis'd perfection for the future day;
 Agnes, her name—ye Fates ah wherefore doom
 So sweet a flow'ret to an early tomb?
 But hold—'tis Time must this sad tale reveal, 25
 'Tis meet that silence now my lips should seal,
 Wrap in thick folds Futurity's dark face,
 Nor yet with babbling pen her sorrows trace;
 Her fire alone surviv'd; Death's icy hand,
 Had snatch'd her mother to th' Elyfian land; 30
 Alas,

Alas, she soon was number'd with the dead,
 Her soul too pure for earth to Heav'n had fled,
 Had she been spar'd to watch o'er Agnes' frame,
 Agnes might then have blest'd the parent's claim:
 Sweet maid, Misfortune mark'd thee at thy birth, 35
 Call'd thy true parent from the realms of earth,
 Plac'd herself substitute to watch thy charms,
 And clasp'd thee fast in her relentless arms:
 Fate had decreed the father should remain,
 To prove that hope of earthly bliss is vain; 40
 Pride call'd him son, vindictive passion reign'd
 Within his breast, and ev'ry action stain'd;
 Mild soothing pity from his tongue ne'er stray'd;
 His look repulsive when the orphan pray'd;
 In vain the voice of woe assail'd his ear, 45
 Lost was the sigh, unmarked the sparkling tear;
 In anger fierce his gloomy brow would swell
 With frowns ev'n Agnes' smiles could not dispel:
 Such was Rodolpho, who with zeal inspir'd
 Flew to those scenes Religion's cause had fir'd; 50
 To plains of Palestine he bent his way,
 Where Ev'ning weeping clos'd each sanguine day;
 Far better had he serv'd his God in forms
 Of peace, and love, than in the battle's storms;
 To him *all Mercy* can the field of blood, 55
 Be constru'd into means of doing good?

Poor harmless Infidel! more pure thy name,
 In Heav'n's mild eye than Christian's crown'd with fame,

Drawn from thy gaping wounds; thy sin is small,
 Th' Almighty hears thy groan, and marks thy fall; 60
 Thy crime thy fathers gave thee—theirs to them,
 'Twas chance that taught the Christian Truth's pure gem;
 Then let him bless that chance with his last breath;
 But Christian hold; nor dare distribute death!
 That pow'r alone belongs unto that arm. 65
 Who knows to succour, and who knows to harm.

Rodolpho call'd his child to bid farewell,
 Rodolpho felt his heart with pride to swell
 As her fond breast with filial duty glow'd
 And tears told nature's impulse as they flow'd; 70
 As whilst she own'd with sighs her ev'ry fear
 Left death her only prop should from her tear;
 As whilst she told him in the battle's jar,
 Her pray'rs should oft invoke his guardian star
 To thwart the treach'ry of the flying dart, 75
 To cure the venom of the jav'lin's smart;
 As her whole soul with chaste affection thrill'd,
 And ev'ry avenue with love was fill'd;
 Rodolpho's tardy nature e'en was mov'd,
 Rodolpho felt *that moment* that he lov'd. 80

Sweet is the infant's smile, the cheek's faint glow,
 The head soft silver'd o'er with filken snow;
 Sweet on the lips to print a fervent kiss,
 To clasp thy hands to Heav'n and own thy bliss,
 In

In silent eloquence express thy joy, 85
 And call down blessings on thy blooming boy :
 If such the transports which the infant gives,
 How much more sweet the joy the heart receives
 When young ideas first begin to steal
 O'er the soft pliant mind—the soul to feel— 90
 The eye to weep for woe—the heart to move
 At tales of falsehood, or deceitful love !
 Agne's bright eyes had sixteen summers seen,
 She knew no guilt, her life was calm, serene,
 Love's wily accents on her ear ne'er stole, 95
 Her thoughts ne'er rovd, nor wanted e'er controul;
 The paragon of ev'ry female charm
 That mind could animate or beauty warm :
 No wonder then Rodolpho heav'd a sigh,
 When on his cheek he felt her brimful eye ; 100
 His heart confess'd the parent's tender claim,
 And nature's rays dispers'd the phantom fame.
 I've seen the sun in early morn contend,
 In contest vain the misty veil to rend
 That shut from Nature's eye his glowing face, 105
 And robb'd the woodland wild of half its grace :
 I've seen the primrose meek, the harebell blue,
 With sorrow hide their charms in ev'ning dew :
 So gentle Agnes far'd ; her beauty's grace
 Retir'd awhile, but left behind the trace 110
 Of what compos'd her mind—transcendant far,
 To the poor glitt'ring toy of beauty's star.

“ My

" My child," Rodolpho cried, " awhile I go,
 " To quell with vengeful sword, Religion's foe;
 " My sins to expiate with courageous hand, 115
 " And strew with Pagan dead the sultry sand;
 " In the meanwhile conceal thy op'ning charms,
 " Nor dare expose thy mind to Love's alarms;
 " Within this castle's walls confine thy walk,
 " Beguile the time with song, with cheerful talk; 120
 " Employ the distaff, make the plaintive note
 " Of the sweet lute, in murmurs wild to float;
 " Tell to thy damsels feats in days of yore,
 " Unfold the tales of legendary lore;
 " And when reclin'd upon thy peaceful bed, 125
 " Thy father's blessing shall o'ershade thy head,
 " A canopy of peace shall o'er thee hang,
 " And shield thy heart from ev'ry earthly pang:
 " If fate should smile with condescension kind,
 " And vict'ry's laurel should my temples bind; 130
 " If fortune's ægis should my bosom guard,
 " And bid me hope hereafter for reward;
 " Bid me in mem'ry's mirror clasp my child,
 " And in perspective view the raptures wild
 " That will o'erpow'r my soul when once again 135
 " I shall resume the father's gentle rein;
 " Then shall pure Hymen's torch thy footsteps light
 " To yonder fane,—and there thy longing fight
 " A husband fond shall greet—Bold Godfrey nam'd,
 " Alike for virtue and for valor fam'd; 140

'Twas

" 'Twas his to wield the lance with daring blow,
 " To deal destruction on the Pagan foe ;
 " 'Twas his to wade thro' blood to conquest's car
 " And seize with extacy the spoils of war :
 " Great Godfrey's claims thou must, thou canst but own, 145
 " Great Godfrey vnes to call himself my son :
 " This my resolve ; Age vainly strives to reek,
 " Its wrinkled malice on his honor'd cheek ;
 " Tho' Time on him has gaz'd with threat'ning brow
 " His sacred head shakes off the whit'ning snow ; 150
 " When Godfrey looks on thee the gales of spring
 " Fan ev'ry pulse and love's soft wishes bring ;
 " Let this thy anguish hush, thy sorrows calm,
 " Check the fast-flowing tear with lenient balm ;
 " Make thee forget Time's present low'ring face, 155
 " In thoughts of joy his future footsteps trace."

Once more he clasp'd his child, then strode his barb ;
 There went the man that shook off Nature's garb ;
 Asham'd of all those ties affection prove,
 Those ties that constitute parental love ! 160
 Agnes he left a victim to despair
 Nor thought his child requir'd a father's care ;
 He plac'd no guardian to watch o'er her fate,
 No matron to protect her friendless state.

Mistaken parent ! can thy child rejoice, 165
 When thou with bold authoritative voice,

Dar'ft

Dar'ft to ufurp the pow'r that can belong,
 But to the foft infinuating tongue
 Of Love?—congenial only to the heart,
 To tell for whom it feels the pleafing fmart. 170
 How wouldft thou feel, fhould thy child's brow be crown'd
 With forrow's wormwood chaplet,—fighs profound
 Steal on thine ear—whilst art her face fhould drefs
 With fmiles—left truth fhould make *thy* bleffings lefs?
 Then would thy heart in foft contrition melt, 175
 Then would thy pangs with keener grief be felt,
 Than thofe that rankle in thy daughters breaft,
 And flop each avenue that leads to reft.

Oh mutual love! to thee what joys belong!
 Joys! whofe description mocks the poet's tongue; 180
 Oh Heav'n on Earth! thou pureft fource of blifs,
 Breathe on my lip, thy chafte ambrofial kifs,
 That I may faintly tell the fairy charm,
 That haunts the foul impreffed with ardor warm;
 The namelefs extacies that crown the pair, 185
 When firft affection's dawning fmiles appear;
 When firft, the ftealing blufh o'erspreads the cheek,
 When firft th' averted eyes their folios fpeak;
 When in the windings of the mazy dance,
 Th' unconfcious maid will fteal the fide-long glance; 190
 Or if the fong invites, with warbling ftrain
 Her tones at firft enchant, but all in vain,

For

For in fond gaze she meets her lover's eye,
 And her weak notes seek shelter in a sigh;
 Or when by time grown bold thou dar'st to tell, 195
 The love that found thy bosom's deepest cell;
 When the first time it 'scapes thy trembling lip,
 And at Hope's fount, thou dar'st whole draughts to sip;
 When on thine ear thou hear'st confirm'd thy blifs,
 And constancy's impression stamps the kifs; 200
 Oh joy partaking most of heav'nly love,
 When in this realm congenial souls we prove!

The mind's keen anguish most requires relief;
 Woes of the heart are earth's acutest grief;
 'Tis then we call on Friendship's soothing pow'r, 205
 'Tis she beguiles the heavy ling'ring hour;
 Bids us our heart's sad scroll with speed uncurl,
 And the dark catalogue with truth uncurl.
 What joy to smother in her breast the sigh,
 To hear her tell us cheering hope to spy 210
 On the horizon's line,—yet dimly seen,
 But as she nearer comes, with looks serene
 She sees our woes, and tells us ne'er to lose
 Sight of her smiles which gentle peace diffuse.

Agnes in tears sought young Dorilla fair, 215
 And told her ev'ry woe, her ev'ry care;
 " Ah me," she cried, " how many a weary hour,
 Must then be mine, when Godfrey knows his pow'r,

C

" Oh

" Oh rouse my heart, talk of the parent's claim,
 " Teach me to feel that I revere the name; 220
 " Teach me to think his stern decrees are just,
 " Teach me to know 'tis him I ought to trust;
 " Oh arduous task, too difficult for me,
 " Oh task too hard for frail mortality!
 " I've seen, to 'scape the bird, the harmless fly 225
 " Rush to the spider's web, and poison'd die;
 " Like the poor fly's my lot, to shun the storm,
 " That reeks its fury in a father's form;
 " My marriage rites will be the fun'ral dirge
 " That's plaintive sung when on the grave's steep verge, 230
 " My breathless corse shall rest; when cease those fears,
 " Those sighs attendant on this vale of tears."

Dorilla sung in sweetly soothing mood;
 Till Ocean to his bed the Sun had woo'd,
 And sober Twilight drest in sil'ry grey, 235
 To Evening pointed out his destin'd way;
 Serenely follow'd Night—the shepherd's fold.
 Was penn'd;—the gate's loud swing had told:
 That to his cot, the swain had welcome found,
 And at that moment help'd to form the round, 240
 That made the circle on his blazing hearth,
 And gave on earth to joy a happy birth;
 How blest, oh happy cottager, thy days,
 Affection lights thee with her purest rays;

With

With glee thou fold'ft thy children in thine arms, 245
 Thou feel'ft inftinctively that virtue warms
 Their little hearts, as to thy neck they cling;
 As round thy happy knees thou fee'ft the ring
 Of fmiling cherubs, lifping each their tale,
 Of all the joys they had in yonder vale, 250
 Where they had kept in merriment and play,
 The anniverfary of May's glad day;
 Sweeter the cruft upon thine humble board,
 Than viands rich with which the great are ftor'd;
 Sweeter the draught that cools thy thirfty lip, 255
 Than wines luxurious which the wealthy fip.

Dorilla led the weary maid to reft,
 Loofen'd her robe, ungirt the ceftus bleft
 That bound her beauties from the gazer's eye,
 That witnefs'd firft the dawn of ev'ry figh; 260
 Then in foft meafures touch'd the trembling chords
 Of the fweet lute, and told in plaintive words
 An artlefs tale; but Fancy ftole the dew,
 That on the poppy hung, and made her view
 In fancy fweet, the fascinating fight 265
 Of Infant pleafure with his eye-beams bright,
 Who breathing foftly chas'd life's clouds away,
 As cradled in futurity he lay;
 From Morpheus' court fhe pluck'd each different charm
 That in mild dreams of blifs the heart could warm; 270

Her plunder bold o'er Agnes' couch she hung,
 And told each spell to use its magic tongue:
 To whisper soft in Agnes' list'ning ear,
 The tale of love that hushes ev'ry care;
 To close for hours in rest her wearied eyes, 275
 That Peace might greet that breast which now she flies;
 No envious elf did fancy's filter spoil,
 Nor with malignant spite her wishes foil;
 For mild Aurora soft on Agnes smil'd,
 And from her eyes she tear of woe beguil'd; 280
 Like the sweet rose just shaking off the dew,
 Cheer'd by the sun she bloom'd in fragrance new.

Eager for fame, Rodolpho fear defies,
 O'er hills, through vales with haste impetuous flies;
 Could he have seen the tears in torrents roll, 285
 Could he have known the woe that pierc'd her soul,
 Could he have turn'd him back and view'd that face
 That in one mould had cull'd each diff'rent grace
 That beauty's features form,—could he have seen,
 The conflicts wild that rent her breast serene; 290
 A magnet more inviting than the cause
 Of honour false, had prov'd fond nature's laws,
 Had fix'd him guardian o'er, his Agnes fair,
 Feeling her happiness his only care.

Time that with lenient hand can ease our woes; 295
 Time from whose gentle current comfort flows;
Time

Time with his steadfast brow on Agnes smil'd,
 And calm'd the conflicts of her bosom wild:
 Months after months in quick succession pass'd,
 Agnes with hope thought each would be the last; 300
 Affection reign'd within her throbbing breast,
 Spite of his cruelty she long'd to rest
 Once more her head upon her father's neck,
 To clasp his hand; and with attention mæck,
 She thought his heart to bend, to melt his eye, 305
 And make his bosom echo sigh for sigh.

Oh flatt'ring Hope, with what resistless glow
 Thou paint'st thy sweet perspective!—there, thy flow
 Of beauty stops—a limner void of care!
 At distance, view thy piece—How matchless fair! 310
 But nearer come, and thy rude pencil's flaws
 Excite the tear that weeps for genius' cause.
 Think not I wish thee gone;—oh Heav'n-born maid
 Still make thy smile pierce thro' life's gloomy shade;
 But come not glowing as in youth's gay hour, 315
 When my young heart hail'd thee the sweetest flow'r
 That e'er adorn'd this earth;—sweet art thou still;
 Sweet to my soul as music from the bill
 Of Philomel, complaining when her hymn,
 To Heav'n she offers, as the ev'ning dim 320
 Veils her from mortal eyes; when fairies float,
 And dance in circles to her melting note.

One

One ev'ning when the wind with frantic cry,
 Shrilly proclaim'd the storm was gath'ring nigh,
 When as in unison the watch-dog's throat, 325
 Answer'd the raven's evil-boding note,
 When cow'ring owls on failing wings did glide
 Watching their fated prey with conscious pride;
 When on the moat's damp side the frog's hoarse croak,
 The genius of the storm did loud invoke; 330
 When to complete the scene the midnight bell,
 Exulting, seem'd the dreaded hour to tell
 When ghosts would stalk and at the murd'rer grin
 And to his mem'ry recal his sin:
 Ev'n Agnes cloth'd in purity's chaste vest, 335
 Felt the creation's storms to combat rest,
 She turn'd from right to left her beauteous face,
 Sought on her lily arm a resting place,
 But all in vain; the elemental jar,
 With drowsy Morpheus held unequal war; 340
 Reflex the fancies that a doleful sigh
 Steals on her ear, and tells affliction nigh;
 Starting, she rises from her bed in haste,
 Quick o'er the room her eager eyes she cast;
 But universal silence reign'd around, 345
 Nor could she hear again th' appalling sound;
 " Ah me," she cried, " am I then Fancy's fool?
 " Have I for this been taught in Reason's school?
 " Fie, Agnes, fie, dispel thy childish fear,
 " Those sounds can only shock weak folly's ear." 350
 Again

Again she sank upon her downy couch,
 And waited patiently sweet sleep's approach,
 At last she gently doz'd, her weary eye
 She softly clos'd, and promis'd rest seem'd nigh,
 But ere sleep hail'd her as a subject true, 355
 (How shall I dare the awful tale pursue?)
 A lengthen'd groan in hollow murmurs slow
 Thrill'd on her heart and fill'd her soul with woe;
 No longer Fancy's dupe, with fear oppress'd,
 Her terror banish'd ev'ry hope of rest, 360
 With frenzied start she skimm'd the gall'ry's length,
 Call'd on Dorilla,—burst with manly strength
 The door, where buried in oblivion's arms
 Her friend in peace repos'd,—Agnes' alarms
 Her rest soon broke—"Oh mercy!" Agnes said, 365
 "Oh come my friend; come to my restless bed;
 "For I have heard, what I'm afraid to own,
 "Oh sweet Dorilla! the slow lengthen'd groan;
 "The sigh of bursting grief I sure have heard;
 "To Heav'n my friend, I have my pray'rs prefer'd; 370
 "Oh let us quick this mystery explore;
 "With innocence our shield,—what need we more?"

Dorilla threw her robe o'er Agnes fair,
 To screen her limbs from night's unwholesome air,
 But ere the gallery's dusky length they'd pass'd, 375
 Groans fill'd the air more dreadful than the last;

The

The watch-dog bark'd in more discordant note,
 The moon in clouds of blood appeared to float,
 The startled females climb'd the window's height,
 And saw expos'd to the cold damps of night, 380
 A being driven by the furious storm;—
 Stretch'd on the ground was his recumbent form;
 No longer harass'd with ideal fear,
 But satisfied that human groans they hear,
 (For ah, in those by Reason's beam refin'd 385
 This mental weakness we too frequent find!)
 They rang with violence the 'larum bell,
 Whose deep-toned tongue announc'd a tale to tell
 Of direful import—that some robber bold,
 Infatiate urg'd by sordid love of gold, 390
 Had boldly dar'd to climb the lofty wall,
 But fear and guilt had made him trembling fall;
 The house alarm'd, each to the other flew,
 And Fear in friendship held th' affrighted crew.

Oh Fear! thou paint'st the coward on the face, 395
 What would I give could I thy features trace?
 Could I describe a scene when nightly dread,
 Had rous'd each mortal from his drowsy bed;
 Could I but truly paint the ghastly stare,
 Could I but mark the eye's wild rolling glare; 400
 Some with their gaping mouths extended wide,
 Others their tongues with terror closely tied,

Others

Others loud chatt'ring left some unknown voice
 Be sudden heard; ev'n the poor cricket's noise
 Should it but chirp that moment, makes the flush 405
 Paint each wan face, and gives the scarlet blush
 Free leave to mantle on each diff'rent cheek,
 And thus variety of terror speak.

Such was the group round lovely Agnes' form,
 Groans the meanwhile outrivall'd ev'n the storm; 410
 Agnes defied the elemental war,
 And by the wand'ring meteor's streaming glare,
 She saw at distance short the figure bold
 Of the same form, whose groans distress had told;
 The massy wall with pain he seem'd to scale, 415
 But when he Agnes spy'd, "Oh hear my tale
 " Sweet Lady fair; Oh grant me soothing aid;
 " Thy pains shall with my gratitude be paid;
 " Attack'd by robbers on the distant plain,
 " I first their band oppos'd but all in vain; 420
 " Numbers pursu'd my steps, force made me fly,
 " The moon, my sorrows pitying, clos'd her eye;
 " The night with fable garb my track conceal'd,
 " No trace was left which my swift flight reveal'd:
 " Inspir'd with dread I climb'd this lofty wall, 425
 " Alas, I thought not then how soon to fall;
 " Oh lady fair, this is no varnish'd tale
 " Meant to deceive, and o'er thy heart prevail;

D

" This

" This is not told that thou should'st kind receive
 " The bloody murderer, and friendly give 430
 " Shelter to him, who would thy blameless life
 " Stop in its course with the uplifted knife;
 " Oh no, my soul scorns such invidious means,
 " My soul, if fault it be, to pity leans,
 " Feels with too keen a pang for human woe, 435
 " Feels ev'n compassion for my deadliest foe."

A portrait chaste of Truth's unfulfilled mould
 Was the sad tale which his mild accents told.

Agnes descends with swiftly moving pace:
 But when her eyes beheld the stranger's face, 440
 Her heart felt Pity's mild effulgent ray,
 To breathe its influence with resistless sway;
 The hardy flint had with presumptuous blow,
 Dar'd to impress a wound on Albert's brow;
 The trickling tear of crimson's ruddy die 445
 Had stain'd the lid that fring'd his bright blue eye;
 And gave a picture to fair Agnes' sight,
 That made her cheek soon put the rose to flight.

Fear's microscopic glass thro', which we gaze,
 Enhances misery's growth a thousand ways, 450
 Exaggerates with active zeal each woe,
 And makes the tear with speed redoubled flow;
 But

But if unwarp'd our minds by terrors guife,
 And to Truth's mirror we transport our eyes,
 'Tis there, we trace with hope the future's face, 455
 And mark the line that checks Misfortune's race :
 So gentle Agnes, when the ruby stain
 Which for a time dethron'd chaste beauty's reign ;
 Had in the contents of the cumb'rous vase,
 (Which deeply blush'd as conscious of the cause), 460
 Found a retreat ; and boldly put to flight
 Its native innocence of lily white ;
 Then Agnes saw that Albert's gory wound,
 Had told a tale Truth joy'd to see disown'd ;
 She bath'd his forehead with the ointment's dew, 465
 Blest youth ! who'd not have wounded been like you,
 When such a recompence your suff'rings meet,
 When Heav'nly beauty offers succour sweet ?

For many a night would Albert's sleepless eye,
 Watch the pale moon the tenant of the sky, 470
 Alas, for many a day the ling'ring hour,
 Was slowly length'nd by pale sickness' pow'r ;
 With kind enquiries Agnes oft would fly
 To catch the breath of hope as steps drew nigh,
 From the domestics ready to impart, 475
 Th' o'erflowing gratitude of Albert's heart.

But Health with balmy dew bath'd Albert's wound,
 Her ruddy fillet round his brow she bound,

D 2

And

And bade his voice with fascinating lure,
 Charm lovely Agnes to his chamber door; 480
 Refrless was its sound, the timid maid;
 In mantling blushes conscious joy betray'd;
 Her falt'ring accents mark'd his alter'd look,
 And crystal tears their azure realm forsook;
 Frequent she'd come an uninvited guest, 485
 And with her lute beguile his soul to rest;
 O'er the soft strings with syren touch would sweep,
 And woo ev'n anguish to the arms of sleep;
 Hang o'er his couch and draw as 'twere by stealth,
 From his false tongue the rosy tale of health, 490
 Ev'n when the fever with its hectic glow,
 Ting'd his wan cheek, and sickness, languid, slow,
 Ran thro' his veins, sweet then her flutt'ring breath,
 Play'd on his cheek, and broke the dart of Death.
 Full soon his broken sighs, his starting tear, 495
 Their volumes whisper'd in fair Agnes' ear;
 Health's glowing tale may all the fancy warm,
 But sickness' sigh can the whole heart disarm.

One morn his cheek with deep carnation glow
 To Agnes' eye proclaim'd a tale of woe; 500
 It seem'd to tell that Sleep refus'd its aid
 Thro' the long night, and that again betray'd:
 By secret pain, the fever's hectic stain,
 O'er Albert's frame resum'd its baleful reign;

Her

Her earnest look reveal'd her waken'd fear, 505
 She clasp'd his hand, and check'd the rising tear;
 Ah happy youth till that transporting hour,
 Thy dawn of bliss thou never thought'st secure
 But Love surpris'd, unwary, told the whole
 And overwhelm'd with transport thy enraptur'd soul; 510
 His tale seducing, Albert joy'd to hear,
 And as his genial with spy'd Agnes' tear;
 "Ah me," he thought, one stratagem I'll try,
 "What means that dew of pity on her eye?
 "What if I say my soul will quickly fly, 515
 "And quitting earth, regain the kindred sky?
 "And should my words prophetic bribe that tear
 "Down her lov'd cheek instinctively to steer,
 "With hope inspir'd my tongue shall then declare,
 "That Agnes only to my soul is dear." 520

"My thanks accept, lov'd maid," Young Albert said;
 "Thy grateful suff'rer lifts his languid head;
 "Not long my feeble voice will soft proclaim,
 "With mild respect thy lov'd enchanting name;
 "Alas I could have wish'd that death's last sleep, 525
 "Had clos'd my eyes that they no more could weep,
 "Then, had my bosom's secret ne'er been told,
 "But slept in Death's impenetrable fold;
 "No voice proclaim'd that I with kindness warm,
 "Fell the sad victim to Love's wily charm; 530
 "That

“ That sad Dependence dug my lowly grave
 “ And Agnes scorn'd my hapless life to save.”

“ Forbear thy words, reproachful Albert, see,
 “ Thy Agnes flies from pomp to Love and thee;
 “ These hands shall raise thee from thy lowly tomb, 535
 “ This voice thy heart beguile of every gloom;
 “ Behold to *thee* my willing suit I tend,
 “ Thy mild attendant, and thy constant friend;
 “ With int'rest warm thy happiness I'll feel,
 “ Thy joys participate, thy sorrows heal.” 540

“ Oh bliss confirm'd!” exclaim'd th' enraptur'd youth,
 “ Forgive this transient sacrifice of truth;
 “ 'Tis Health has fix'd her chaplet on my brows,
 “ The dew of damask roses from it flows
 “ And falls upon my cheeks,—'Tis joy that warms, 545
 “ And o'er my frame sheds mild her rosy charms.”
 Transported Albert rais'd to Heav'n his eyes,
 And own'd his gratitude in smother'd sighs.

“ Hail sickness! hail! thy consecrated name
 “ Shall be refounded by the trump of Fame; 550
 “ Talk not to me fond youth,” Young Albert said,
 “ That thou with grief hast fought the lonely bed,
 “ Where faint with groans, subdu'd thou seem'st to lie,
 “ Thy nurse the tear, thy cordial in the sigh;
 “ That

" That if bright Health again thy brows should crown. 555
 " Courage should make thy tongue thy sorrows own;
 " Mistaken youth! if Health my cheek had dress'd,
 " How dar'd my lips her hand with love have press'd?
 " Think'st thou if sickness had not made the tear
 " Swim in my eye, that I thus freely dare, 560
 " Have press'd with ardent warmth her snowy hand,
 " Which has since then, wav'd o'er my head that wand
 " Whose ambient standard crown'd with Venus' dove,
 " Proclaims the joyful birth of mutual love?
 " Think'st thou if sickness had not lent its bliss, 565
 " I dar'd in health have stole the balmy kiss,
 " That hung with rapture on that dewy lip,
 " Where Gods themselves with extacy might sip?"

" Oh Heav'nly maid forgive Deception's veil,
 (" My tongue no more shall falsely tell the tale) 570
 " If when I told thee that my temple's heat,
 " Requir'd thy lily hand in peace to beat;
 " If when I told thee that the restless couch,
 " Felt chilly cold, and urg'd thy quick approach
 " To lend thy shoulder for the pillow's place, 575
 " And make me happiest of human race;
 " Forgive thy Albert when his treach'rous sigh
 " Caus'd the big tear to tremble in thine eye."

Oh happy pair, old Time you must beguile
 With youthful visions from your magnet smile, 580
 Subdue

Subdue his frothy bosom with your cheer,
 That his lash'd steeds may spurn his ancient car;
 Make him the while the hours shall gaily pass,
 Forget to turn the sand that fills his glass.

Albert in rapture knelt at Agnes' feet; 585
 " To make my happiness sweet maid complete,
 " To-morrow, speed me Heav'n, to Godfrey bold
 " I'll go; and when my happy tale I've told,
 " An uncle's sanction shall confirm my bliss,
 " And I in transport seal affection's kiss." 590

Alas, fond youth, thy unsuspecting tongue,
 Has hurl'd the dart that quiver'd as it hung
 O'er hapless Agnes' head; thy tones of joy
 Struck on her soul, and mis'ry's keen alloy
 Fix'd her a marble statue on the earth; 595
 And that dark hour hail'd dire affliction's birth;
 From that sad time too sure the dew of woe,
 In liquid drops has trembled on her brow,
 Has made her tear-swoll'n eyes trace back those days
 Joy dazzling crown'd her with its verdant bays. 600

" Oh Albert!" Agnes cried, " with speed unfay
 " Those luckless words, that dissipate each ray
 " Of sweet reviving hope; a cloud of woe
 " O'er shades my head, and dims with raven brow

Those

" Those scenes Futurity so sweetly dress'd 605
 " In the bright beauties of gay pleasure's vest;
 " Alas my Albert, Godfrey's wrinkled hand,
 " Claims mine to join it in pure Hymen's band;
 " My father's mandate sanctions his desire,
 " (The victim hails with woe the altar's fire) 610
 " If force should drag me to the hated fane,
 " Force cannot make my heart its truth profane;
 " Albert, for thee, my soul shall heave its sigh,
 " Thy spirit ne'er shall say, " those eyes are dry;"
 " Soon shall affliction weave my hapless shroud, 615
 " Soon shall the hollow bell in accents loud
 " Proclaim, that Agnes, cold upon the bier,
 " Goes to the grave, and trusts for quiet there."

Albert in agony o'er Agnes hung,
 And drank the bitter draught which thro' her tongue , 620
 She to his heart convey'd; " Alas! fond maid,
 " Bow'd down with sorrow seems thy hapless head;
 " Yet still my sanguine hopes forbid despair,
 " To stretch us lifeless on pale Sorrow's bier;
 " Myself will tell to Godfrey all my woe, 625
 " Hear his own tongue confirm him friend, or foe;
 " To-morrow's dawn may happiest make me prove,
 " Of the blest votaries of immortal Love;
 " To-morrow's dawn may stop my vital breath,
 " And make me clasp with joy the hand of death." 630

E

Albert

Albert a horseman sent to Godfrey's dome,
 And ask'd his presence at fair Agnes' home;
 Plead'd, that wounded by a luckless blow,
 He'd been prevented from that spot to go;
 Told in his scroll their tale of mutual love, 633
 And hop'd his blessing might their vows approve.

The morning deck'd with all Aurora's glow,
 Hail'd the approach of never ceasing woe;
 So oft sweet smiles terrestial joys proclaim,
 While the heart sighs, "I'm stranger to the name!" 640
 Lovely dissemblers, why oh falsely tell,
 The exile joy does in your bosom dwell?
 Oh let your magnet with attractive wile,
 In blest reality her steps beguile
 To the forsaken confines of the breast, 645
 That soon may follow her fair handmaid, rest!

The thund'ring hoofs of Godfrey's warlike steed,
 Proclaim'd aloud his proud imperious tread:
 Trembling with terror Agnes' tottering feet
 Sought the first couch on which to take her seat; 650
 Agnes that morn veil'd each attractive charm,
 That might the heart of Godfrey bold, disarm;
 Her hair that else in golden waves did play,
 And woo'd the breeze that welcom'd in the day,
 That oft in wild disorder careless hung, 655
 And hid those charms that else the gazer's tongue

With

With joy had blabb'd, fought in the fillet's fold
 A calm retreat, her ringlets waving gold
 No charm disclos'd; the veil of lawn conceal'd
 All the mild beauties which her breast reveal'd; 660
 The charms of animation all were fled,
 Bending with modest grace, she hung her head;
 Like the mild snow-drop beautiful in tears,
 That droops desponding, while it owns the fears
 That drive it shrinking from the pelting storm, 665
 Close its mild eye, and half its grace deform;
 Agnes tho' wrapt in woe more heav'nly seem'd
 In Godfrey's eye, than when bright, beauty beam'd
 In frolic laughter on her sportive face,
 And made her cheek the dimple's hiding place. 670

When Godfrey's eye on Agnes eager rov'd,
 And saw the lovely child he once approv'd
 Moulded to that bewitching heav'nly form,
 That he design'd should shield from ev'ry storm
 His future days; "Albert, rash boy," he cried, 675
 "Dismiss thy daring hopes, or by that pride,
 "That has sustained me in the hour of woe,
 "I'll hurl thee from me as my deadliest foe!
 "Dar'ft thou dispute with me her plighted hand?
 "Where are thy revenues, thy house, thy land? 680
 "What standard has thy nerveless arm e'er bore?
 "Has thy bleach'd sword e'er drunk the Pagan's gore?

" Shame! Shame! no claim hast thou for beauty's prize,
 " Perform some glorious act nor think to rise
 " To her bright temple, whilst thy spotless sword 685
 " Unfullied hangs, nor has with blood been gor'd.

These words rous'd Agnes from her tott'ring feat,
 And on her bended knees at Godfrey's feet
 She prostrate fell; " Oh Godfrey hear my pray'r,
 " Sweet to my soul is Mercy's lenient ear; 700
 " Sweeter the trophies that adorn her car,
 " Than clots of blood that mark the track of war;
 " Sweeter the branch of peace that in its beak
 " Hangs from the dove, than steel that loves to reek
 " Its point in hearts that feel the parent's glow, 705
 " The parent's anguish, and the parent's woe!
 " His sword which innocence has bleach'd
 " I kiss—thine, which so oft has fiercely reach'd
 " The life-blood's feat, still smokes with human gore,
 " And tho' now glutted, thirsty seeks for more; 710
 " A woman's soul asks not the warrior's din,
 " The tale of mercy must her bosom win;
 " The fight of blood subdues her mind with fear,
 " But the sweet smile of love dispels each care;
 " The pomp of grandeur ill would hang on me, 715
 " I'd hail chill Poverty with bended knee,
 " Rather than wear in courts the costly gem;
 " Happier the slave who bears my garment's hem!"

Mistaken

Mistaken eloquence! alas sweet maid,
 Thy guileless tongue unmeaningly betray'd 720
 Thy soul's first wish, it breath'd upon the spark,
 That but for thee, might ne'er have left its dark
 And ebon cell; alas thy sorrow's found,
 In Godfrey's heart implanted deep the wound;
 Oh had he only gaz'd, his soul in sighs 725
 Might then have told the volume of his eyes;
 But when a mind like thine displays its charm,
 It ev'n the frozen breast of age can warm.

To give the scene its glow in Godfrey's eye,
 Albert with jealousy's deep tinctur'd dye 730
 He view'd—that passion dire possess'd his breast,
 Akaunce he frowning look'd, meantime its rest
 His heart forsook——“ Prepare this ev'ning boy,
 “ To meet me at my dome,—nor dare to toy
 “ With dalliance here;—I leave thee till that hour; 735
 “ Bid her adieu, with all that friendship's pow'r
 “ Bestows; 'tis mine with just and lawful claim:
 “ To link my Agnes with immortal fame.”

The ev'ning oft that closes Heav'n's blue eye,
 Wafts to the ear the breeze in many a sigh; 740
 The trembling leaves declare impending show'rs;
 Bending their lowly heads, the humble flow'rs
 Will shrink prophetic from the thunder's storm,
 Lest furious winds destroy their tender form:

Alas

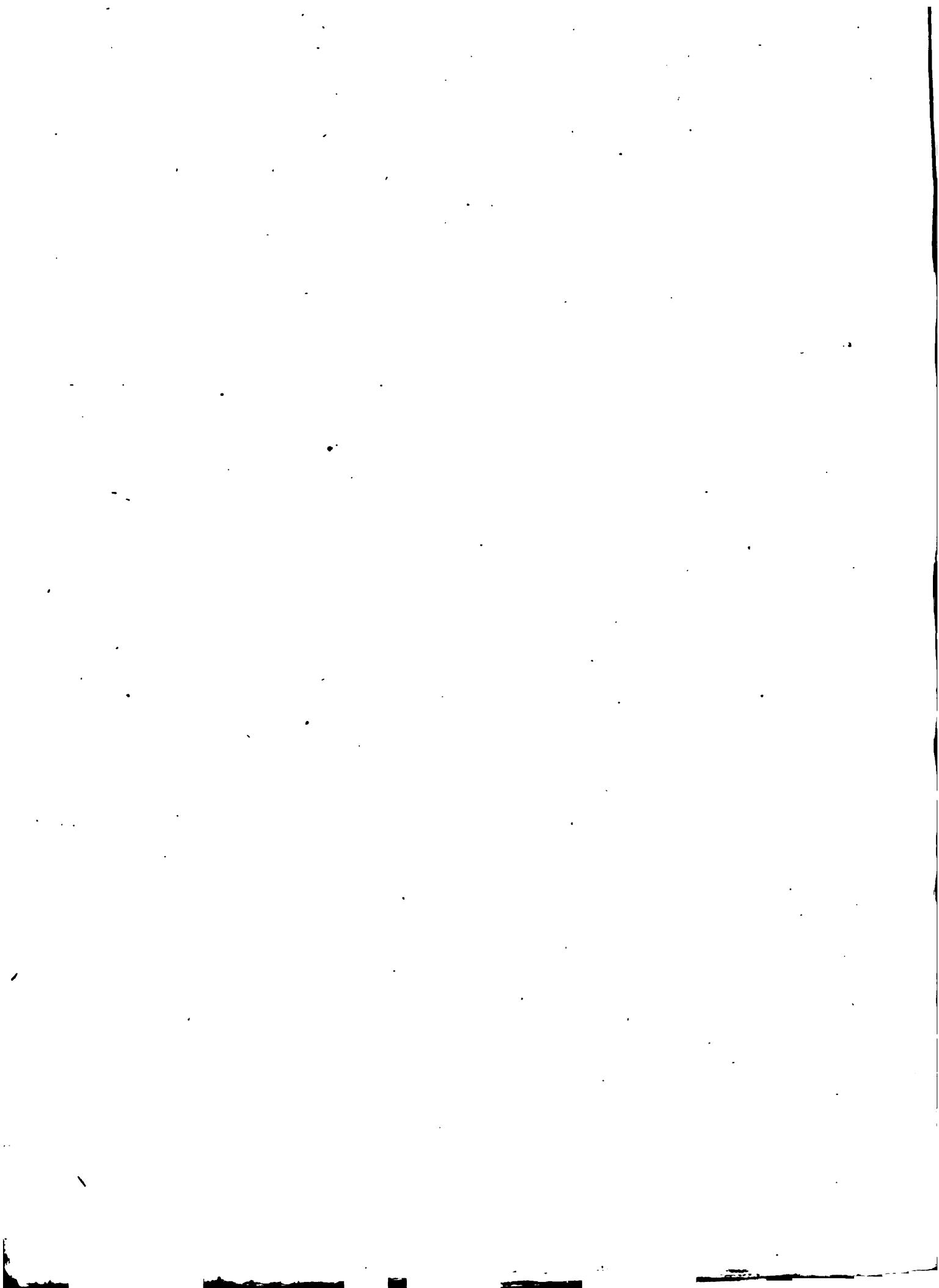
Alas o'er Albert's frame no genial gale 745
 Dispers'd the clouds to the unconscious vale!
 For o'er his luckless head burst loud the storm,
 That wither'd pleasure's fascinating form;
 "Agnes," he cried, "I go, but my fond heart,
 "From thy enchanting image ne'er shall part; 750
 "Sunk in my breast lies deep thy virgin love,
 "It likes too well its cell to wish to rove;
 "But if in truant thought it e'er could stray,
 "I then should surely curse my natal day;
 "Believe me Agnes that I love too well, 755
 "To suffer mem'ry but on thee to dwell."

"Albert, I droop," the beautiful Agnes said,
 "Beneath this cruel blow, that bows my head
 "To weep on sorrow's lap:—oh ere we part,
 "Take this my image, wear it next thy heart; 760
 "Then when thy gaze is fix'd upon this face,
 "And thou dost Agnes in each feature trace;
 "Say, such my Agnes was,—and then behold
 "Thy Agnes modell'd in affliction's mould,
 "See what she will be—in these laughing eyes, 765
 "Make mem'ry bid two crystal drops to rise;
 "Suppose this cheek t' have lost its blooming glow;
 "Suppose this hair that here in joy does flow
 "In ruffled folds to hang, its beauty gone;
 "Suppose the careless knot, this emerald zone; 770
 "Suppose

" Suppose this arm to hold my aching head ;
 " Suppose the pillow moistening on my bed ;
 " Suppose this hand to hold my throbbing heart,
 " That heart which beats for thee—Albert we part
 " In person ; but not time himself shall dare 775
 " To chafe from memory thy image dear ;
 " Then while thou weep'st to see thy love so chang'd,
 " Then while thou heav'st the sigh to see derang'd
 " Those features that could once thy bosom warm,
 " That could thy soul of ev'ry woe disarm, 780
 " Look to the cause of this—thou'lt Albert see,
 " Then will thy sigh heave double sure for me ;
 " This is my last sad gift ; this badge of blue
 " With which I tie this knot, says, " Agnes true :"
 " Take this my parting kiss, catch this my tear ; 785
 " Their source my Albert is the heart-sincere ;
 " Farewel my bosom's Lord, haste, haste away,
 " May'st thou supported be by Hope's mild ray,
 " May'st thou perceive its glimmer on thee shine,
 " And gild thy future days as well as mine ; 790
 " If on this side the grave we cannot find,
 " One gleam to animate the sinking mind ;
 " If on this earth she deigns not to be seen
 " To gild our sorrows with her smile serene ;
 " Over our turf-built graves she'll surely fly, 795
 " And snow-drop shrouds shall screen each smother'd sigh."

END OF THE FIRST BOOK.







BROOMHOLME PRIORY.

Book the Second.

ARGUMENT.

ALBERT disconsolate, leaves Rodolpho's castle—his gloomy journey—his subsequent melancholy—reflections on modesty—Agnes' unhappy state—reflections on female virtue lost—Rodolpho returns to his castle—his meeting with Agnes—the test of friendship—Rodolpho appears to be happy—renews his intention of marrying Agnes to Godfrey—her avowal of her dislike to Godfrey and of her love for Albert—Rodolpho's rejection of Albert—Albert's love considered as a misfortune to Agnes—reflections on wedded happiness—Agnes' resolution in favor of Albert—Albert having been sent to the holy wars Rodolpho frames a tale of his being killed there, with which he acquaints Agnes—her grief related—Rodolpho feigns sickness and intimates the approach of death—by which he deludes Agnes into a promise of marriage with Godfrey—Albert learns the treachery—flies to Rodolpho's castle—arrives there on the evening preceding the day intended for Agnes' nuptials—bribes the porter to procure him an interview with Agnes—is shut up in the chapel in expectation of it.

WITH forrowing step, when Twilight rob'd in grey
Invok'd the ev'ning star to shed its ray;
When glow-worms peeping thro' the gloomy shade
Hung their bright lamps to cheer th' embow'ring glade,
The luckless Albert left the castle halls,
His captur'd heart a pris'ner in its walls;

F

5
Pensive

Pensive he stray'd, the turrets caught his eye,
 And from his heart escap'd th' intruding sigh;
 Alas! his fancy would instinctive turn,
 To weep o'er pleasure's desolated urn; 10
 But ah, e'en Hope with mild refulgent gleam,
 Scorn'd to bestow one animating beam:
 Mild was the night—the softly whisp'ring breeze
 Offer'd its music to the waving trees;
 Alas, young Albert found no flow'rets fair 15
 To fling their fragrance in the ambient air;
 His eye alone beheld a dreary void,
 With emblems weeping happiness destroy'd;
 His mournful pathway saw the vengeful thorn;
 The tow'ring elm the northern tempest's scorn, 20
 Whilst pois'nous ivy round its sapless stem,
 Studs its bare arms with many an æthiop gem;
 Ah me! how like the world; with smiling face,
 We hug destruction in the strict embrace;
 Often the hand we hold in friendship's clasp, 25
 Knows that its fellow hides the pois'nous asp;
 And yet the elm the victim of the storm,
 Tow'rs o'er the foe that kills its hapless form;
 Such is the lot of suff'ring virtue here,
 She lifts her head above this narrow sphere, 30
 On Heav'n she fixes firm her plaintive eye,
 And its safe magnet guides her to the sky.

Slowly

Slowly approaching; Godfrey's dreary dome
Foretold to Albert, sorrow yet to come.

Aurora found young Albert whelm'd in woe, 35
And eve's mild dew would pity's drop bestow.
The fyren Joy lull'd him no more to rest,
No longer deign'd to be his bosom's guest,
Flew to the paths strew'd thick with Nature's flow'rs
That led to Pleasure's aromatic bow'rs; 40
Her fairy feet impress'd the violet blue,
The hare-bell faint, who meekly bow'd to woo
With kisses mild her renovating tread,
That made it bolder raise its drooping head;
So have I seen sweet modesty dismay'd, 45
Shrink from the public gaze, her ear afraid,
Left on herself should fall the sharp remark,
Left Envy should invent some mischief dark;
But if Encouragement with potent sway,
Would guard her blushing fav'rites thorny way, 50
Would tell her only what blest truth would tell,
And still would on that tale delight to dwell,
Then would her eye look up to meet the smile,
That could soft music from her lips beguile.

Albert awhile we leave in Godfrey's pow'r, 55
Who ne'er with kindness footh'd the ling'ring hour;
O'er Mem'ry's tablet Albert sorrowing wept,
Whilst his fond heart too true her records kept.

Rodolpho's castle witness'd Agnes' gloom,
 Forlorn she travers'd each deserted room; 60
 The tapestry'd annals on each mould'ring wall,
 In slaughter'd numbers mark'd the mortal's fall;
 With loosen'd strings her harp dejected hung,
 Alas, no more Love's raptures mild it sung;
 With down-cast eye would lovely Agnes rove, 65
 And trace the path once witness of her love;
 Each well-known flow'r would deck sweet Fancy's wing,
 And Albert's image to her memory bring;
 To ev'ry woodbine clinging round the tree,
 Her sigh would say, "my bosom's guest thou'dst be 70
 " Were Albert here; still wanton in the air
 " Suspend thy drooping charms, no hand shall dare
 " To crop the blushing honours of thy head.
 " And rob the fays of their luxurious bed."
 The breeze would bear in plaintive notes the song, 75
 Of the poor ringdove plunder'd of her young,
 Would in each gale proclaim her breaking heart,
 Till grief awaken'd made poor Agnes start;
 The wave would sing in murm'ring whispers low,
 The dirge of thousands buried deep in woe, 80
 Would in hoarse accents chide the treach'rous cliff,
 That hung destructive o'er the vent'rous skiff;
 This sight would Agnes witness, till with fear,
 Her blushing check woo'd to its court the tear.
 The queen of night had oft her charms display'd, 85
 In lustre full, and oft had view'd the maid;
 Her

Her crescent beauties too she had reveal'd,
 Till the intruding cloud her face conceal'd.
 Alike the seasons with revolving sway
 Had mark'd the beauty of each separate day 90
 Spring crown'd with purpling violets sweet had smil'd,
 Summer had deck'd her brows with roses wild,
 Maturer Autumn pluck'd the yellow corn
 And patch'd with red'ning leaves her mantle torn;
 The red breast tam'd by poverty would fly 95
 Free to the house, his promis'd meal to spy,
 Would perch on Winter's hand at break of day
 And sweetly chant his grateful roundelay:
 Ah me! humanity these changes mark,
 They sometimes light with smiles the prospect dark, 100
 Rouse the torn breast, stifle the rising sigh,
 Or else the tear would crystallize the eye.
 Agnes survey'd bright Nature's various charms
 But felt alas, the chill of Sorrow's arms;
 Subdu'd with woe, Hope terrified did fly, 105
 And bore the kerchief to her own sad eye;
 No mortal orb sweet maid shall ever see
 Her joy distilling drop to fall on thee;
 On the fair favorites of happier fate,
 Her balm of comfort loves with glee to wait; 110
 On Joy's gay offspring she bestows her kifs,
 For them she paints gay dreams of future blifs;
 But most the child of hapless Mis'ry's band
 She fright'ned flies, HER, who by Hymen's hand

Was never link'd, but carries in her arms 115
 The pledge which oft the heart of coldness warms;
 Then while she feels its little breast to heave,
 Famine pursues her steps, and makes her leave
 On the thick furze-clad heath its helpless form,
 Its cries soon silenc'd by the louder storm: 120
 Oh would the world before it dar'd to talk
 With tongue so loud, but take a nightly walk,
 And view the luckless wretch who once like them
 Rob'd in white innocence could vice condemn;
 Would they but trace perhaps the early cause, 125
 That urg'd her to transgress blest virtue's laws;
 Would they but contemplate in Truth's clear eye
 The horror which assail'd her heart; the die
 Of hapless guilt which on her soul did glare,
 And made her frenzied tear her flowing hair; 130
 Would they consider the soul-rending shame,
 When guilt's connected with the parent's name;
 Would they but view bright exultation's rose
 That flushes virtue when her babe she shows;
 Then would they turn their eyes and straight behold, 135
 The hapless babe who's wrapt in misery's fold;
 See strong convuls'd the mother's brimful eye,
 When a third ear first hears the infant's cry,
 When sad confession must the tale reveal,
 And silence dares no more her shame conceal; 140
 Oh

Oh could the world but half her anguish know,
 It would not fure proclaim her tale of woe;
 It would not to the dog prefer the crust,
 And make the human outcast lick the dust!
 Far be't from me to clasp with equal love, 145
 The child who could thro' choice from virtue rove,
 Forbid it Heav'n? but when in life's young day,
 Mild education should have shed its ray;
 When the pure principle with lenient balm
 Should o'er the pliant mind have breath'd its calm; 150
 When soft affection should have told the tale
 Of all the lures that haunt this mournful vale
 In shapes that fascinate the giddy eye,
 When youth's warm bosom knows not e'en the sigh:
 When I remember that Death's ruthless blow 155
 Had call'd the parent from these realms of woe,
 And that no other tongue had dar'd to say
 That Vice in Virtue's garb could sportive play;
 Then sighs will heave for soothing virtue gone,
 When sad conviction owns her charm is flown. 160

One morn resounded on fair Agnes' ear,
 The martial trump that spoke a hero near;
 But clouds of dust veil'd from her eager eye,
 The wish'd-for image of Rodolpho nigh;
 On near approach the glittering spear would beam 165
 And on the eye its dazzling splendor gleam;

The

The thund'ring hoofs resounding on the plain
 Announc'd the numbers of the warrior train;
 A band of knights conducted with renown
 Rodolpho deck'd with laurels dearly won; 170
 For the poor Pagan felt blest nature's laws,
 And fought undaunted in her sacred cause:
 Each glad domestic flew to greet his Lord,
 Who bad them quickly spread the sumpt'ous board;
 With cheerful voice the knights he joyous hail'd, 175
 And with the purple grape their hearts regal'd,
 Till ev'ning chequer'd the resplendent day
 And warn'd each warrior to pursue his way.

Friendship with anxious scrutinizing gaze,
 And tearful eye, the well known face surveys, 180
 When fate has destin'd it for length of time,
 To brave the perils of the distant clime;
 She clasps again the hand, and with her eye,
 Devours each sep'rate feature; makes the sigh
 Ask the once well known heart if Friendship's heat, 185
 Continues still its tenor blest to beat?

Rodolpho soften'd as his child he saw,
 He found a portrait rare; without a flaw!
 Beheld with joy the animating glow,
 That o'er her face with radiance seem'd to flow; 190
 Beheld those charms which e'en at bright sixteen,
 He joy'd to see transform'd to beauty's queen,

with

With all the majesty of woman's grace,
 That did the mind in every feature trace.
 Affection held her to his throbbing breast, 195
 And hapless Agnes once again was blest;
 The battle's raging heat he valu'd not,
 And victory itself was all forgot,
 For Agnes sooth'd the tumults of his soul,
 Which oft would like the foaming billows roll; 200
 Oft with a fairy touch she swept the chords,
 That lac'd the magic harp, and in soft words
 Of plaintive sweetness, sung those warlike times,
 When Warriors nobly fought in distant climes;
 Oft on his knee she'd sit and softly smile, 205
 To hear him tell the subtle soldier's wile;
 So pass'd the time; Rodolpho happy seem'd,
 The fire forsook his eye that dazzling gleam'd
 From its dark piercing orb, and oft the glow
 Of mild affection caus'd her tear to flow. 210
 One morn she look'd with more than usual grace,
 Mild Fascination's smile adorn'd her face,
 Whilst blushing roses mantled on her cheek,
 And ev'ry look pure virtue seem'd to speak;
 Rodolpho could his tongue no more controul, 215
 " Oh come my Agnes, read the fates' blest scroll,
 " Read their decrees; awake thy mind to joy,
 " Let Pomp's bright banners all thy thoughts employ,
 " Let me behold the diamond's glitt'ring ray
 " To grace thy brow, outrivalling the day 220

" In dazzling splendor; let the constant pearl
 " Clasp thy lov'd arm, and let the artless curl
 " That unadorn'd now flows, the emerald stone
 " Confine; let costly rubies form the zone
 " That will with rapture press thy lovely form, 225
 " When Greatness guards thee from the low'ring storm;
 " Read Agnes, read, this paper's glowing die,
 " Unfolds Golconda to thy ravish'd eye;
 " Behold my child, behold thy spotless name,
 " Refounded by the trump of glorious fame, 230
 " From pole to pole thy beauty's praise shall sound,
 " From Heav'n's arch'd vault to earth and sea profound,
 " The proudest honors then shall deck thy head,
 " When Godfrey leads thee to thy nuptial bed."

" Alas my Lord thy eye that beams with joy, 235
 " Gives pleasure to thy child; but why employ
 " Thy tongue to summon up my flowing tear,
 " That drowns my helpless voice o'ercome with fear,
 " When I confess Humility's mild lot,
 " Leads me instinctive to her mossy grot; 240
 " When I in preference would smile to own,
 " The couch of comfort, than the bed of down;
 " Alas, my Lord, this garb with joy I kiss,
 " This flowing hair asks only freedom's bliss;
 " My tottering limbs would sink beneath the weight 245
 " Of costly gems; the plume's presumptive height
 " Would

" Would hold an object up to public gaze,
 " Whose heart would joy to fly from grandeur's maze;
 " My falling knee my Lord, thy robe shall kiss,
 " To sanction any thing but *splendor's* bliss; 250
 " To minds aspiring it might yield a balm,
 " Might to some hearts bestow a soothing calm
 " To quell the storms of life, alas, to me
 " Of sorrow keen a lasting source must be:
 " Deception shall not veil my blameless tongue, 255
 " (Too sure my days to future woe are strung!)
 " But my heart never will affection swear,
 " When it another's image joys to wear;
 " Oh Sire! thy frown convulses all my frame,
 " But yet deceit shall never hide his name, 260
 " No, tho' its fount should draw a father's hate
 " Full on my hapless head, and my sad fate
 " In sorrow's hand should lie; my throbbing heart
 " Would heave for Albert, e'en if Death's keen smart
 " Had pierc'd its inmost core; his name I'd sing 265
 " E'en if my ling'ring soul were on its wing
 " To scenes of bliss,—my guardian sprite would steer
 " To earthly realms to catch my last sad tear,
 " Give it to Albert for his Agnes' sake
 " To heal his heart that else would sorrowing break." 270

Rodolpho's angry eyes on Agnes fell,
 Alas, his tongue explain'd their truth too well;

" The stripling Albert nee'r shall have thy hand:
 " Hear these my words, obey my fix'd command;
 " Sooner than Albert should at Hymen's shrine, 275
 " His vow of love eternal join with thine;
 " I'd joy to see thee in the marble tomb
 " The prey of ruthless Death; its hollow womb
 " Thy lifeless form should fill, than Albert dare
 " Presume to make thy bliss his future care; 280
 " Rather than coward Albert e'er should rise
 " Without one act to claim thy beauty's prize;
 " Rather than he should think to stamp the kiss,
 " That Kings themselves might deem celestial bliss!
 " Forbid it Heav'n!—this sword that by my side 285
 " Now idle hangs, should search thy life-blood's tide:—
 " Retire my child; consider what I've said,
 " Ponder my words when resting on thy bed;
 " Consider well that Grandeur beck'ning stands
 " And welcome bids thee with her open hands; 290
 " Remember thousands on thy smiles will wait,
 " From thy all pow'rful hand receive the doom of fate."

Ah luckless youth! when first th' unconscious maid;
 Thy form with mild compassion had survey'd,
 Too quick the unbidden sigh, the intruding tear, 295
 Claim'd with usurping power their separate sphere.
 She might with her's have link'd bold Godfrey's name,
 She might have been th' adopted child of Fame;
 " Tho'

Tho' she had never felt the rapt'rous kifs
 Of mutual love; yet still a tranquil blifs, 300
 Might have consol'd her days; her father smil'd,
 As heav'd with peace the bosom of his child.

Ah heedless youth! when first your wand'ring eye,
 Gives the known glance, proclaiming beauty nigh;
 When as you gaze with transport on the face, 305
 And the presumpt'ous with the smile can trace;
 When you with rapture meet the sparkling eye,
 And Fancy to your ear wafts faint the sigh;
 When as with extacy these marks you tell,
 And fairy love first finds your bosom's cell; 310
 Ah me! would you believe the friend tho' true,
 If he advis'd you, ne'er that face to view?
 If he should tell you that the artless smile,
 That hover'd round the lips with rosy wile;
 Would like the spider in her filmy bed, 315
 Wind round your hapless heart her poison'd thread?

Frequent alas, the rose of wedded love,
 Fades as the gales of time their influence prove;
 First, the bright damask, lends it heighten'd glow,
 And bids gay animation's charms to flow; 320
 Then comes, when Modesty has ceas'd to blush,
 The lovely tint that speaks contentment's flush;
 Then mark'd with vari'd hue the fatal flow'r,
 That witness'd Lancaster's inferior pow'r,

An

An emblem true, the partial hectic bloom 325
 Oft stripes the cheek when the maternal doom
 Is seal'd;—and when the animated joy
 Enchains the arms around the darling boy,
 Then comes that hue that paints the virgin rose,
 And tells the tale that speaks the end of woes: 330
 Here could I wish to stop, but see a flow'r
 Bestrews with whit'ning shells yon mossy bow'r;
 It is the sad white rose, that drooping dies,
 And scents the gale with its expiring sighs;
 Alas, this emblem makes my heart to bleed 335
 'Fresh with its hapless truth; ah me! that weed
 Neglect—too common grows with poison fill'd
 In that parterre, where once the heart's-ease wild
 In joy did flourish; oft its influence dread,
 Breathe's dire contagion o'er the nuptial bed; 340
 Then, like the sad white rose, the hapless wife
 At Hymen's altar sacrifices life;
 Bows her wan head, lifts up the suppliant eye,
 And asks her God the privilege to DIE.

A wily stratagem at length was laid 345
 To win to Godfrey's bed the lovely maid;
 Rodolpho told a tale by Falsehood fram'd;
 Rodolpho blush'd not when he Truth defam'd;
 Oh no, one wish alone his heart possess'd,
 Of Splendor rob him, and farewell his rest. 350
 One

One ev'ning when the beams of Sol's bright ray,
 Had mark'd in stripes of gold th' expiring day;
 He call'd in seeming agony his child,
 And held her to his breast with transport wild;
 " Ah Agnes read, peruse these fatal lines; 355
 " The wreath of woe instinctively entwines
 " Around thy luckless brow;—my child I feel
 " For thy heart's peace; let me with kindness heal
 " A wound that stabs thy life;—thy Albert dies,
 " Stretch'd on the field, where the dead Pagan lies; 360
 " At my desire he bled him to the plain;
 " That cowardice no more his name might stain;
 " Alas, at my desire, thy hand to gain,
 " He courted glory on th' enfanguin'd plain,
 T o make him worthy of thy virgin love 365
 " He flew with joy, the battle's heat to prove:
 " Repentant here I kneel and sue to thee,
 " Oh grant that mercy thou ne'er hadst from me;
 " Feel for thy father prostrate at thy feet,
 " Tranquillity no more my days shall greet: 370
 " My crime, my Agnes, rushes on my mind,
 " Peace in my breast no more a place shall find:
 " Oh that the javelin which reach'd Albert's heart,
 " Had in my bosom been a poisonous dart!
 " Thy mild looks wound me more than anger stern, 375
 " What can I do?—ah whither can I turn?
 " Where can I fly to shun that pallid cheek,
 " That can seek only me on whom to reek

" Its

“ Its volumes of reproach? to whom belongs,
 “ The curse of rumour with her thousand tongues.” 380

Rodolpho ceas'd; no tear from Agnes' eye
 Could stray, ah no! its source alas! was dry;
 No volumes of reproach came from her tongue,
 No words of anger on her pale lips hung;
 Despair that moment enter'd deep her heart, 385
 In torpid languor fix'd; one thrilling start
 She gave, when first her Albert's luckless name,
 From the harsh lips of stern Rodolpho came.

Alas she could not weep, her heart's keen grief,
 One only solace knew to gain relief; 390
 Her harp with eloquence seem'd true to tell,
 The hapless death of Albert, lov'd too well!
 By Fancy led, she follow'd to the field,
 The youth who boldly dar'd the javelin wield;
 Then would she waft him on the angel's wing, 395
 To those blest courts where choirs of happy sing;
 Chant in her ev'ning hymn her Albert lov'd
 By all the good on earth; by Heav'n approv'd.
 Oft would she wander on the sea-beat shore,
 And musing sad humanity deplore; 400
 The rolling wave would heave its bosom high,
 And as in sympathy with her would sigh.
 Then Agnes wept to think the sailor brave,
 Had sunk unfriended 'neath the whelming wave:

Then

Then climb'd the gentle hill, and watch'd the fail, 405
 Borne swiftly from her by the fav'ring gale;
 " Ah hapless bark, too true thou tell'st these eyes
 " The thousand storms that mark the mortal's rise;
 " I view thee now, and see thee smoothly glide,
 " Safety thy magnet;—Hope thy matchless guide 410
 " Swims in the nautilus' shell, and veils
 " Half her mild image with its rainbow fails;
 " Ah me, so pass'd my happy youth, no storm
 " Did e'er my bosom of its peace deform;
 " Albert thou once wert Hope to this sad eye, 415
 " Thy smile could dissipate each rising sigh;
 " Cold lies thy frame beneath the earth's damp sod,
 " Thy soul now bows before the throne of God;
 " If thou'rt allow'd in that blest world to know,
 " The wretched offspring of terrestrial woe— 420
 " And yet, my heart forebodes that cannot be,
 " Pure sons of bliss can ne'er our sorrows see;
 " Else would the father's aged heart 'fresh bleed
 " When in his son he saw the murd'rer's deed;
 " Else would the mother with despair be wild, 425
 " As prostitution hover'd o'er her child—
 " This cannot be; our minds must feel a change
 " When in the realms of bliss our spirits range!"
 But when fierce storms the ship in fury tost,
 The sad remembrance of poor Albert lost,
 Her pensive mind with melancholy crost. } 430

So pass'd succeeding months, till the career
 Of Time had clos'd the swift revolving year:
 Rodolpho feigning grief o'er Agnes sigh'd,
 (She thought not then Deceit with him allied) 435
 So, oft we press the Earth's bright flow'ry bed,
 Nor e'er perceive the viper's darting head,
 Until its wound inflicts the direful pang,
 And death's swift arrow gives the fatal twang.
 Oft would Rodolpho heave th' intended sigh. 440
 Full on her unsuspecting ear; his eye,
 Oft as it caught her gaze, away he'd turn,
 Then would he try to shew the hectic burn
 That flush'd upon his cheek, whilst oft the tear,
 Would make his face the garb of mis'ry wear; 445
 These wily arts Rodolpho oft would try,
 And quick his fancy would submission spy
 In luckless Agnes' mind; her melting heart
 Had wounded been already by the dart.
 Of ruthless Death, she dreaded left his hand, 450
 Should link her father to his mournful band;
 She saw his pale wan cheek deep mark'd with lines,
 That told too true the spoiler's dread designs;
 Oft would he feign the ague's shiv'ring cold,
 Then would he Agnes to his bosom fold; 455
 " Ah me, my child read sad Rodolpho's doom,
 " Alas I'm hast'ning to my father's tomb;
 " I leave thee friendless, open to the storms
 " That haunt this earth in Mis'ry's num'rous forms.

No

" No kind protector to watch o'er thy head; 460
 " No husband's love to guard thy spotless bed;
 " Ah me, I die! my soul sinks with despair,
 " Alas my living frame is shrouded here;
 " This trickling dew that moistens o'er my brow,
 " Destroys each comfort, leaving ev'ry woe; 465
 " A few short months will linger o'er my head,
 " And then my corse be number'd with the dead."

" Oh stay my father, Heav'n's decree I'll bear,
 " Oh do not say *I* gave thee to despair;
 " I will not make thy last hours bitter prove, 470
 " My father now claims all my earthly love;
 " I now can wed without base perjury's stain,
 " I now can wed, still Truth may hold her reign;
 " Albert, alas is gone, he has no claim,
 " I cannot join to his my virgin name; 475
 " If to this earth he *can* direct his eye,
 " He'll breathe his blessing o'er me in a sigh;
 " Oh stay my father and consent to live,
 " See on these knees my future peace I give;
 " If I by duty, thy dear life prolong, 480
 " E'en the base world cannot proclaim me wrong."

" Alas my child, that day I ne'er shall see,
 " And yet a balm to this sad heart 'twould be,
 " If I but knew before next moon were past;
 " That thy lov'd lips would seal this promise fast." 485

" Then rest in peace my Sire, but Agnes prays
 " Of time an interval, then Heaven's rays
 " Shall witness that this hand to Godfrey giv'n,
 " Will only ask th' approving smile of Heav'n."

These are the fatal rocks that youth's bright eye 490
 Beaming ingenuous, never can espy,
 They lie conceal'd beneath the glassy face
 Of life's eventful sea, no lure we trace,
 Until Experience wrecks our gliding bark,
 And spreads her canvas of destruction dark. 495.

Albert meanwhile had anxious wish'd to win,
 The dear-bought glory of the battle's din;
 Dispatch'd by Godfrey to the distant plain,
 'Twas falsely told the daring youth was slain;
 But Truth the charge denied, for Albert's life, 500
 Boldly withstood the battle's bloody strife;

Now swift Report with wide and open wing,
 Did the transactions of the castle bring
 To Albert's luckless ear, that Agnes mild,
 Had been alas, by treachery beguil'd! 505
 Straight he his courser press'd, like light'ning flew,
 Whilst day and night did each their course pursue;
 Until the well-known turrets caught his eye,
 And call'd instinctive from his heart the sigh.

Alas

Alas, what anguish memory conveys, 510
 When present ill extinguishes the rays
 That glimmer'd once around the happy brow,
 When down the cheek no path the tear did know;
 Oh then what agony to catch the gaze
 Of the known fabric, where in Pleasure's maze 515
 Youth joyous wander'd, now alas how chang'd!
 Its outside looks the same, but all derang'd
 The scene within; alas, this heaving sigh
 Forebodes the tear that dims my conscious eye!

The star of eve beam'd bright in Heav'n's expanse, 520
 And rous'd young Albert from reflection's trance;
 To his sad eye it seem'd the brightest gem
 That loop'd in gay festoon, the studded hem
 That fring'd the sable robe of widow'd Night,
 Who mourn'd her bridegroom, fled in exile's light: 525
 His courser neigh'd to welcome in his Lord,
 Mistaken animal! no more the board
 Of hospitality for him was spread,
 No more his frame dar'd rest on friendship's bed;
 Swift to the watchful porter Albert hies, 530
 Reveals his anguish; with entreaty plies;
 But all in vain, till virtue-bribing gold,
 Subdu'd that heart that to distress was cold.

" To-morrow's dawn seals my sad lady's doom,
 " To-morrow's eve she goes to Godfrey's home; 535
 " Hymen's

" Hymen's gay trophies now adorn the fane,
 " That will to-morrow view thy forrow vain."

" Oh hear my pray'r," the frantic Albert cried,
 " Grant me one boon, nor dare my plaint deride;
 " Take all I have, my purse, these knots of gold 540
 " That tie my mantle in each diff'rent fold;
 " Oh grant me Agnes once again to see,
 " And e'en till death thy constant friend I'll be."

Vain are the arguments the mind employs,
 Vain the free eloquence the tongue enjoys, 545
 If 'tis to these alone we have to trust,
 They mount the passing wind like clouds of dust;
 But at the end of ev'ry finish'd line,
 If we bestow the produce of the mine
 Upon the ready hand, then have we claim, 550
 To dwell for hours on one enamour'd name.

" Ah me, my Lord," the tempted porter cried,
 " Far be't from me thy forrow to deride,
 " Come to yon door that to the chapel leads,
 " And, (Heav'n forgive me for my foul's sad deeds;) 555
 " I'll seek the friend most to my mistress dear,
 " And tell her that thou wait'st her coming there;
 " Hush! hush my Lord, tread lightly on thy heel
 " Or babbling Echo will thy steps reveal;

" Go

“ Go in, and wait with patience my return 560
 “ Nor from this spot dare thy rash footsteps turn.”

He clos'd the door that with the yielding air
 Echo'd to Albert nought but blank despair.

Ah luckless youth how shall I paint thy pangs
 Or tell the misery that o'er thee hangs! 565
 How shall I paint thy woe when by the ray
 Of Cynthia, thy pensive eye would stray
 Around those walls that the next morn. would bear,
 In loud responses luckless Agnes' pray'r
 Thro' the arch'd roof, full on the ear of Heav'n; 570
 Her father whisp'ring soft to be forgiven.

The moon gleam'd full upon the marble tomb
 Where Alice wept in monumental gloom,
 Fair Agnes' hapless parent; who in youth
 Was martyr'd at the shrine of perjur'd Truth; 575
 For stern Rodolpho pluck'd this blooming flow'r,
 That with unkindness wither'd in the hour;
 She held her kerchief to her streaming eye,
 Whilst hov'ring Hope show'd her redeemer nigh,
 Shew'd his torn feet, his hands, his bleeding side 580
 With the big drops of purple anguish dyed;
 He look'd on her in smiles; th' attentive choir
 Of list'ning Seraphs, waiting his desire,
 Proclaim'd, “ now broken is her earthly rod,
 “ Ye angels waft her to her bosom's God.” 585
 But

But when he trembling reach'd the altar's base,
 Fixt like a statue on the hallow'd place,
 His gaze he cast upon an eyeless skull,
 That once wept woe of which his heart was full;
 He saw the lipless mouth where once the tongue 590
 In tones of melody had joyous sung:
 At last in agony he frantic cried,
 " Oh envi'd ma's who could thee e'er deride?
 " Would that this care-worn frame might see decay,
 " Before my eyes should view to-morrow's day; 595
 " Fix on me now oh Death, thy lasting frown,
 " Would I could bribe thy scythe to cut me down;
 " Then would my Agnes on to-morrow's morn
 " See my sad bosom so with anguish torn
 " That it no more could beat; this brimful eye 600
 " Should drain for her its *all*, and then be dry;
 " Then whilst the fleeting breath should from me steal,
 " Her soothing accents should my anguish heal;
 " My tongue should, tho' imperfectly, still sound
 " My Agnes' name, till my faint voice was drown'd; 605
 " E'en then my breath should waft my dying sigh,
 " For Agnes' peace, and calmly would I DIE.

THE END OF THE SECOND BOOK.





BROOMHOLME PRIORY.

Book the Third.

ARGUMENT.

INVOCATION to Fortitude—Albert gains composure—the propriety of submitting to trials in this life—the Porter's return to the chapel—Agnes cannot be seen—Albert refuses to leave the chapel—the marriage morning—Godfrey arrives at the castle—Rodolpho introduces him to Agnes—Her speech to Rodolpho—the power of the female sex—the banquet—they proceed to the chapel—painful effects of memory—as the abbot begins the marriage ceremony Albert rushes forth and claims Agnes—Godfrey exasperated wounds Albert with his sword—Albert falls—Agnes faints—Albert supposed to be dying is carried to Godfrey's castle—Agnes revives—the visionary dream of youth exemplified in the fallacy of friendship and love—Agnes loses her reason—Madness considered as the height of human misery—Agnes' madness and death.

THEE Fortitude! despairing Man entreats,
To lead him kindly to thy lone retreats;
To place him with thee on the sea-beat shore,
And fancy music in the ocean's roar;

I

Where.

Where musing thou wilt sit and hear the sound 5
 Of frantic murmur from the depth profound;
 Or dare the lightning with its forked fire,
 To dart upon thy breast its vengeance dire;
 Thou seem'st regardless, when upon the bed
 Of the deep ocean, the half sinking head, 10
 With th' uplifted hand in pity crave
 The blest exemption from a wat'ry grave:
 Thou who can'st calmly hear the maniac's cry,
 But never point'st to Reason hov'ring nigh;
 Who hear'st him rave for world's beyond this sphere, 15
 Trying with frenzied plaint to draw them near;
 Come to the mansion of the happy dead,
 And shed thy power o'er Albert's aching head;
 Teach him with stern indiff'rence to forego,
 The heart's affections and thy calmness know; 20
 Teach him to hear unmov'd the nuptial vow,
 Steal from fair Agnes' lips, to see her bow
 Before the altar's base with look serene,
 To gaze as *thou* dost with unruffled mien:
 And yet oh Fortitude, Compassion flies 25
 Thy leaden step, and still o'er mis'ry sighs:
 Let it be mine ne'er with indiff'rence stern,
 From sorrow's tale a listless ear to turn;
 Let me in soothing sympathy impart
 Repose, and comfort to the wounded heart; 30
 Let me still cheer with hope in this sad vale,
 The languid voice that tells pale sickness' tale;
 Oh

Oh let my bosom be her peaceful couch,
 Let my hand scatter comfort with its touch;
 May my torn heart continue fresh to bleed, 35
 For ev'ry suppliant's woe, until the feed
 Of Heav'n-born mercy, so should love the foil,
 Of my warm bosom, that devoid of toil,
 A grove of Pity's foliage should screen,
 Each child of sorrow who with ague keen, 40
 Feels the chill north-east wind, that in the world
 From ev'ry quarter is by Envy hurl'd;
 Mine be the woe that rends another's breast;
 Weep with the wretched, with the blest be blest;
 Keep for the happy few the smile sincere, 45
 Whilst sorrow's child should claim my constant tear.

Young Albert felt the mind's acutest woe,
 Till from his eye the stream began to flow;
 Such sweet relief will soothe the troubled breast,
 And give the struggling soul immediate rest; 50
 Oh balmy dew-drop trembling on the eye
 Of those whose bosoms feel th' oppressive sigh;
 Thou, who as Sorrow with her harrow flow,
 Tells with each iron tooth some tale of woe,
 Dost sprinkle with thy dew of peace so sweet 55
 Life's rugged foil, that at her bleeding feet
 The heart's-ease blest with joy will once more spring,
 Cling round the rugged thorn and hide its sting;

Welcome again to luckless Albert's eye ;
 Welcome thou token of composure nigh! 60
 The gales of virtue lent their healing balm,
 And o'er his mind diffus'd a soothing calm ;
 With bended knee he offer'd up his pray'r,
 Resolv'd life's storms with fortitude to bear ;
 Whilst his torn heart relied on Mercy's God, 65
 And bow'd with rev'rence to the scourging rod,
 That for some wise but unknown purpose here,
 Smites those the most, who are to Heav'n most dear.

The grating lock now struck on Albert's ear,
 And from his eye he wip'd the trickling tear ; 70
 Swift to his mind deluding fancy flew,
 And Agnes' image blest his grateful view ;
 But vain the sanguine hope his fancy rear'd,
 None, save the porter, trembling now appear'd
 With hurried step ; " Oh fly, my Lord," he cried, 75
 " Or instant ruin will thy steps betide ;
 " Fly from this spot, in speed thy footsteps take,
 " If not for mine, for my dear lady's sake,
 " The friend to whom I flew to tell thy tale,
 " Lies on the bed of sudden sickness, pale ; 80
 " To her I could not then thy message give ;
 " The vassals on Rodolpho's bounty live ;
 " On him with trembling soul they silent wait,
 " Obey his nod, since he commands their fate ;

" Wait

" Wait till his face on theirs reflects the smile, 85
 " Wait till his voice, of truth their lips beguile ;
 " Oh haste from danger, fly this fatal spot,
 " Oblivion then with faithful pen shall blot,
 " This guilty deed of mine from Mem'ry's page ;
 " Fly, fly my Lord, nor brave Rodolpho's rage." 90

" Never, so help me Heav'n !" young Albert cried,
 " Here will I stand, Rodolpho's wrath abide ;
 " I'll see my Agnes on to-morrow's morn,
 " From me and happiness for ever torn ;
 " Not all the pow'rs of man shall drive me hence, 95
 " My bosom bare shall scorn e'en self-defence ;
 " My lips shall kiss the sword that seeks my heart,
 " Convuls'd with woe, life from this frame shall start,
 " My flitting spirit from this world shall spring ;
 " Pray for my Agnes' peace, then swiftly wing 100
 " To those blest regions, where with joy we trace,
 " The smile serene that plays on Virtue's face."

Deaf was young Albert to entreaty's pray'r,
 Penfive he stood, and wrap'd in deep despair
 His soul severer anguish ne'er could know, 105
 He seem'd to pass the line of human woe.

The porter rais'd his supplicating eye,
 " Oh grant, my Lord, if thou refuse to fly,

" This.

" This one request ;—Oh raise thy javelin bright,
 " And guide it thro' yon glimm'ring casement's light, 110
 " That stern Rodolpho by its means may trace,
 " Thy daring entry to this hallow'd place ;
 " Oh use this just deceit, or famine dread,
 " Will threat'ning hover o'er my wretched head ;
 " Driv'n from this castle, whither shall I fly ; 115
 " My lisping babes will raise th' imploring eye,
 " My hapless wife with me in sad despair,
 " Our infants' sufferings will be doom'd to bear."

" I grant thy just request " brave Albert cri'd,
 " As Fate decrees that here I should abide." 120
 Thus said, the casement in a glassy show'r
 Gemm'd bright with stars the tessalated floor :
 The porter's footsteps soften'd on his ear,
 And the door's grating hinges sigh'd despair.

Night with her matron weeds and wrinkled brows 125
 Who constant lulls young Phoebus to repose,
 Who hides his burning cheeks in Ocean's bed,
 Rocks him to rest in waves of floating red ;
 Thought it full time to rouse her sleeping care ;
 She rais'd his canopy of golden hair, 130
 That veil'd in silken luxury his eyes
 And bad her drowsy charge in speed to rise ;
 Phœbus thus rous'd, unclos'd his heavenly eyes,
 Their azure influence mantling on the skies ;

Shook

Shook off the liquid sheets that deck'd his bed, 135
 And rais'd with heaviness his sleepy head;
 The god of day refulgent, put to flight
 The canopy of clouds, that floating light
 O'er his recumbent form in airy fold,
 Had softly to the breeze his beauty told; 140
 Then blushing deep, with speed they quickly flew,
 Lest the bright God their confidence should view,
 And in their flight oft shed a crimson tear,
 On many a flow'ret innocently fair,
 Splashing with gaiety the daisy meek, 145
 Tinging with modesty the wild brier's cheek;
 For tints of morn the various flow'rs bedight,
 So ancient fables tell, and poets write.

In peals of melody the Heaven rung,
 Each feather'd warbler tun'd to love his tongue; 150
 Ah luckless race how short your happy state,
 Soon flies the transient morning of your fate!
 Ah me, your tones of joy sad Albert's heart,
 Caus'd with a keener agony to smart;
 So have I seen, when that the battle's heat 155
 Is past, and vict'ry's drum exults to beat,
 When that the shrill-voic'd fife in merry tones,
 Joys loud to tell the conquest that it owns;
 The hapless widow raise to Heav'n her eyes,
 Pour out her breaking heart in heaving sighs; 160
 Whilst

Whilst banners proudly wav'd aloft in air,
 Her soul was deeply sunk in mute despair:
 Ah me, so fell on luckless Albert's ear,
 The trump which told imperious Godfrey near;
 The dew of sorrow hung upon his brow, 165
 Alas, the sound rous'd ev'ry sense to woe;
 O'er-pow'r'd he sunk behind the pillar's gloom,
 And silent envi'd ev'ry mould'ring tomb.

Meanwhile the revels of the day began,
 And smiles spake joy in all Rodolpho's clan; 170
 Their vestments 'broider'd like the rainbow gay,
 Mark'd the transaction of the happy day.

Bold Godfrey mounted on his courser white,
 Receiv'd the welcome which his grateful fight
 Drew from the menial throng, and show'rs of gold 175
 With eloquence, how plain! his bounty told;
 The standards curling with the passing gale,
 Show'd in each waving fold some tender tale;
 Each vassal bore the badge of Venus' dove,
 To note with stronger mark their master's love; 180
 Thrice did the herald at the castle sound;
 The tidings echo'd thro' the halls profound;
 The huge portcullis in its rapid flight,
 Announc'd a welcome to the gallant knight.

Rodolpho

Rodolpho met with warmth bold Godfrey's grasp, 185
 And held him close in friendship's sacred clasp;
 " Oh welcome friend most dear: my joy I own,
 " The friend and father greets with love his son;
 " Come and behold thy blooming matchless bride;
 " My heart exults with all a father's pride; 190
 " Soothe with thy smiles a timid virgin's fear,
 " With gentle softness check the rising tear;
 " Hear her consenting lips confirm thy bliss;
 " And on her cheek imprint Affection's kiss."

Rodolpho led th' exulting bridegroom thro' 195
 The ancient dome, and quickly gave to view
 His lovely bride; but who can paint her form?
 What eye could gaze and not with transport warm?
 A robe of spotless white in airy fold,
 Clung round her limbs and ev'ry beauty told; 200
 A vest that rival'd the bright lilac's glow,
 In light festoon display'd her neck of snow;
 Her step united dignity and grace,
 Whilst rosy blushes mantled on her face;
 In tones melodious sweetly flow'd her voice, 205
 That Gods themselves might envy Godfrey's choice.
 Such was his peerless bride; her pensive eye
 She rais'd benignant, as their steps drew nigh;
 Rodolpho clasp'd in extacy his child,
 And kiss'd her cheek as she on Godfrey smil'd. 210

K

" Behold

" Behold my father, at thy feet I kneel,
 " And ask thy lips my vows of love to seal;
 " Here is my hand, join Godfrey's strait to mine,
 " And let the gift if valu'd ought, *be thine*;
 " For Godfrey knows my heart with Albert brave, 215
 " Is firmly fix'd, and hovers round his grave:
 " Oft will the sigh heave from my bursting soul,
 " Oft will my flowing tears in torrents roll;
 " Yet still he must not chide, nor harshly frown,
 " The heart's affections, virtue 'tis to own; 220
 " But when the nuptial vow my lips shall bind,
 " To Godfrey will I shew attention kind;
 " Give ev'ry comfort that my soul *can* give,
 " And shew for Godfrey *only* that I live;
 " If sickness e'er shall throw her morbid veil 225,
 " O'er his wan frame, my hand alone shall heal;
 " Watch thro' the nightly hours with tender care,
 " Until bright Health returns her image fair;
 " Then will I raise to Heav'n my grateful eyes,
 " Whilst my full heart, with fervent thanks shall rise; 230
 " This is the off'ring Duty kneeling brings,
 " And to its theme my soul shall tune its strings;
 " 'Tis Truth that prompts my lips and candid tells,
 " On whom my soul's affection fondly dwells;
 " What Duty asks, my mind shall freely give, 235
 " For Godfrey only henceforth will I live;
 " If he this boon accept, my plighted hand,
 " Awaits the badge that marks the nuptial band;
 " But:

“ But should he scorn the gift, with smile benign,
 “ I’ll own the heart of peace again as mine.” 240

Oh sex, who win not by deceitful wiles,
 But melting softness, and attractive smiles!
 Why boasts the tyrant man his mighty pow’r,
 When beauty comes, the vision of an hour?
 Seek the true way to tame this despot bold, 245
 And use the means by ancient poets told,
 In mildness let your honied accents roll,
 Reflecting true the calmness of your soul;
 Ne’er with decided voice give judgment strong,
 But court instruction with persuasive tongue; 250
 When danger threatens, and proud man is near,
 Fly to his arms and court protection there;
 If he denies you when you soft complain,
 Own only then, a woman’s charms are vain.

Godfrey subdu’d, o’er lovely Agnes hung, 255
 And heard enchanted her bewitching tongue;
 Press’d to his heart this sweetly blooming rose,
 Whilst love hush’d ev’ry care in sweet repose.

The banquet serv’d, the minstrel’s chanting note,
 Caus’d liquid harmony in air to float; 260
 The joyous harp with loud resounding twang,
 The val’rous deeds of fallen heroes sang;

Then in sweet murmurs breath'd the plaintive flute,
 Whilst virgins tun'd to Love and Joy the lute;
 The banquet o'er, the vassals strew'd the way, 265
 With ev'ry flow'r from Nature's garden gay;
 To that proud temple where with fervent zeal,
 Agnes her vows to Godfrey firm should seal;
 The damsels cloth'd in white led first the throng,
 And chanted Hymen's raptures in their song; 270
 Then came fair Agnes, like th' imperial crown,
 The garden's pride; the tear ran trickling down
 Her lovely face; whilst e'en her clouded brow,
 Gain'd double int'rest from her bosom's snow.

Enchanting Mem'ry to past periods flies, 275;
 Her track too oft we mark with brimful eyes;
 Trace back those scenes when smiles would joy to stray,
 E'en thro' the veil that hid the future day;
 Then will the tear with blest sensation spring,
 Perch on the moisten'd lid, and swiftly wing 280
 An happy exile from th' o'er loaded breast,
 That has forgotten long the name of rest:
 Such were the pearls that dimm'd fair Agnes' orb;
 Such were the thoughts that did her mind absorb;
 They rose not at the present sorrow felt, 285
 On joys long vanish'd, mem'ry fondly dwelt.

Enraptur'd Godfrey claim'd the trembling fair,
 And by attention hush'd each rising care;

Conducted:

Conducted to the altar's foot his bride,
 And stood th' exulting bridegroom by her side; 290
 Arrang'd in order, the surrounding throng,
 Hail'd the chaste sounds that from the abbot's tongue,
 In hallow'd accents flow'd; with fervent zeal,
 The holy father bad his children kneel;
 When thro' th' echoing dome a footstep's sound, 295
 Broke with intrusion on the awe profound;
 But who can paint the terror of each brow,
 When in the heighten'd shades of mental woe:
 Rush'd hapless Albert forth with frenzied stare,
 And drew the frantic shriek from Agnes fair? 300

" My long lost love, oh raise thy drooping head,
 " Alas! is Albert to thy mem'ry dead?
 " It cannot be!"—he cried, " by falsehood slain,
 " I come to shew the tyrant's treach'ry vain;
 " Here will I claim thy hand, their pow'r defy, 305
 " So thou but view me thro' mild pity's eye;
 " So thou but smile as in those happier hours,
 " When sickness woo'd me to fair friendship's bow'rs;
 " When by its influence led, without controul,
 " Love pierc'd the mazy pathway to the soul; 310
 " Oh happy period, ne'er to be forgot,
 " Not Time's obliterating sponge can blot
 " From my fond heart, those days on which too well,
 " Sad retrospection, does instinctive dwell."

" Ill-fated

" Ill-fated youth!"—the weeping Agnes said, 315
 " Report's false tongue has long proclaim'd thee dead,
 " Too credulous I deem'd the tidings true,
 " But now my prompt credulity I rue;
 " My lips have not pronounc'd the hallow'd vow,
 " 'Tis only to *thy* love, my knees shall bow; 320
 " To thee I give my hand, whilst my fond heart,
 " Never from Albert, e'en in thought shall part;
 " Oh hear me Godfrey, with attention hear,
 " Never thy splendid trappings will I wear;
 " Ne'er could I close my eyes upon thy breast, 325
 " Where broken vows, would rob me of my rest."

" Rash, foolish boy!" impetuous Godfrey cries,
 Whilst storms of passion darted from his eyes;
 " Release her hand, or this avenging steel,
 " Shall in thy bosom my fierce vengeance seal. " 330
 Forth from his side the murd'rous blade he drew
 Whilst Agnes shrieking midst th' attendants flew,
 Tearing with violence her flowing vest,
 And bar'd the beauty of her throbbing breast;
 " Oh hold thy murd'rous hand"—she frantic cri'd, 335
 " Stop thy fell sword—or drink this purple tide;
 " Guide here thy hand, and find this constant heart,
 " Dig deep and make it from its cell to start;
 " 'Twill spring with glee at Albert's feet to fly,
 " Bathe them with crimson tears, and joy to die— 340
 " Let

“ Let but my Albert live;—Death’s icy hand
 “ Shall waft me smiling to a happier land. ”

“ Oh lovely pleader, hide thy matchless charms,
 “ And find thy refuge in thy Albert’s arms,
 “ Conceal thy beauty in this faithful breast, 345
 “ Tell *me* thy woes, and sigh thy soul to rest. ”

As Albert forrowing o’er Agnes hung,
 Hope’s soothing accents flowing from his tongue;
 Godfrey enrag’d, rais’d his relentless sword,
 Which kept in faith too true it’s master’s word; 350
 O’ercome with rage he gave the death-fraught wound,
 And purple streams imbru’d the hallow’d ground,

“ Ah me! I sink beneath the murd’rous steel,”
 The hapless Albert cried,—“ no pow’r can heal—
 “ Ah me—these rending pangs—alas I die— 355
 “ Bleeding I fall—no friendly succour nigh—
 “ Farewel my injur’d love—catch my last breath,
 “ My eyes are shaded by the film of death—
 “ But e’er my hov’ring soul forsakes this frame—
 “ Oh hear me, PEACE with all the world proclaim— 360
 “ This outstretch’d hand e’en Godfrey’s pardon seals—
 “ This heart no dire resentment for him feels.”

Lamented youth, forgiveness mark’d thy fall,
 And rous’d compassion in the hearts of all,

Ah:

Ah me! e'en valour's breast would heave with sighs, 365
 And many a tear would cloud the warrior's eyes;
 The misanthrope with fix'd and earnest gaze
 Might for a time look on—but e'en the rays
 Of his dry orb would dim, and his stern frown,
 Would in the flowing tear its harshness drown, 370
 His uprais'd hand would banish with disdain
 The bold intruder, turn, and gaze again,
 But once a coward made, o'ercome he flies,
 And e'en his flinty heart at mis'ry sighs,
 Sighs as he sees extended on the floor, 375
 The lovely Agnes crimson'd with the gore
 That rush'd from Albert's wound, whose fault'ring breath
 The near approach declar'd of cruel death:
 The swoon's dead stupor over Agnes hung,
 No sound of anguish issued from her tongue, 380
 Whilst lost Rodolpho frantic with despair,
 Tore with his wretched hands his hoary hair;
 How great the pangs, oh Godfrey, thou must feel,
 When Albert pardon'd thy destroying steel!
 How mild the sword that gave the fatal wound, 385
 Compar'd with Mercy's soft bewitching sound
 That sprung from Albert's soul!—His vassals loud,
 Then Godfrey call'd, who to his mandate bow'd;
 He bade them stanch the flowing crimson tide,
 That issu'd from the wound, alas how wide! 390
 On the soft litter rais'd his sinking frame,
 And call'd on Albert's long-forgotten name;

Repentance

Repentance true, his bosom seem'd to fill,
 For the past years of persecuting ill,
 Thro' which with pow'r oppressive he had frown'd, 395
 And ev'ry kindred claim had long disown'd;
 The vassals bore him to bold Godfrey's dome,
 And welcom'd bleeding Albert to his home.

Rodolpho's trembling frame bent o'er his child,
 And Gratitude his tongue of words beguil'd 400
 When Agnes fair unclos'd her heav'nly eyes,
 And speech returning, loud on Albert cries;
 Rodolpho rais'd her from the pavement cold,
 The marble stain'd, a tale most dreadful told;
 "Dig deep," she cried, "Oh dig my hapless grave, 405
 "Try not with kindness false my life to save;
 "Oh precious drops that from the constant heart
 "Of my lost Albert flow'd—tho' the keen smart,
 "Of rending anguish, at this hour I feel,
 "'Tis at thy fight alone my soul shall steal 410
 "A glimpse of future peace; this bloody vest,
 "I'll press forever to my faithful breast,
 "The only pillow which my aching head,
 "Shall wish to covet for my wretched bed;
 "My only dear companion in the day, 415
 "As thro' life's melancholy scenes I stray
 "And when kind Heav'n shall soothe my soul to peace,
 "When pain and pleasure equally shall cease;

L

" Albert's

“ Albert’s lov’d heart in union blest with mine,
 “ Shall ’midst celestial spirits constant shine.” 420

Alas! thus ends the visionary dream,
 Of unsuspecting youth! alas this theme
 Must swell with tears the hoary sage’s eye,
 And o’er frail mortals make him heave a sigh;
 Does the fond heart acknowledge friendship’s pow’r, 425
 Hoping for comfort in the adverse hour;
 Where is the tongue that will not feign the tale,
 That bears foul slander on each passing gale?
 Whilst dark suspicion lifts her murd’rous knife,
 And aims a secret blow at Friendship’s life; 430
 Divides those bonds that once in union blest,
 Link’d with the mutual wish each kindred breast,
 Where can we ’scape pale Envy’s tainted breath;
 That rests not easy till the shaft of Death
 Sent by her hand, with sure and certain blow 435
 Lays in the grave her hapless victim low?

And thou oh Love, e’en thou more treach’rous art,
 Thou fascinating syren of the heart;
 Why dost thou gaze with softly swimming eye?
 Why use the witchcraft of the magic sigh 440
 With skill so true?—forego thy ruthless trade,
 And weep to see the ruin thou hast made;
 The tears that trembling fill the virgin’s eye,
 Do they not sometimes as thou cleav’st the sky

Damp

Damp thy elastic plumes, and in the air 445
 Suspend thee o'er the spot where mourns the fair?
 And cannot her soft breast pierc'd by thy dart,
 Move thy undaunted soul?—and with the smart
 Of keen remorse, wilt thou not draw the shaft,
 And to the air its shiv'ring atoms waft? 450
 Oh no, thou veteran in human ill,
 Thou laughing view'st thy flutt'ring arrow's skill!

Were our unhappy thoughts doom'd only here
 To stop, and rest upon this earthly sphere;
 The tide of anguish ne'er would cease to flow, 455
 But fill the measure up of human woe;
 But when adversity with heavy hand
 On the bold forehead stamps her furrow'd brand,
 Sheds on the care-worn breast her crimson tears,
 And Mis'ry's child her sanguine liv'ry wears; 460
 Then sweet Religion points beyond the skies,
 And smiles supplant the tears that dimm'd our eyes;
 Some heav'nly pow'r bears full upon its wing,
 Pure sounds of *Peace* that blessed angels sing;
 While hopes transcendant raise the sinking breast, 465
 Transporting swift our thoughts to endless rest.

Ah me that such had been the envy'd state
 Of her these lines record, but wayward Fate,
 Decreed her mind a trial still to bear;
 Agnes the wreath of peace must never wear. 470

Reason's blest lamp that lights the wav'ring mind,
 And shows the path Affliction joys to find;
 That hangs suspended from Hope's hallow'd hand
 Shedding its rays upon the barren land;
 Perceiv'd the black'ning cloud of blank Despair, 475
 Daring presumptuous to her orb to steer;
 Ah me, it nearer came and larger grew,
 And dimm'd its light with thick adhesive dew,
 Its Strong effulgence scorning to retire
 Beam'd momentary with more radiant fire; 480
 Its flame aspiring touch'd pale Frenzy's spark,
 That fad Despair hid in her bosom dark;
 Scorch'd the fair hand, alas, of smiling Hope,
 And from her fingers burnt the twining loop;
 In its quick fall extinguish'd was its light, 485
 And weeping Reason mourn'd perpetual night:
 Agues the moon with silv'ry eye beheld,
 No cloud in pity did her vot'ry shield;
 Her pallid rays shed frenzy on her brain,
 And vanquish'd reason felt her influence vain: 490
 Rodolpho shudder'd when in frantic spring,
 She try'd to pluck the studs from Heaven's ring;
 And trembled at the soul-subduing sound
 Of sweet delirious melody, that drown'd
 The ling'ring hours in softly swimming joy, 495
 Proclaiming true her harp was Frenzy's toy;
 For hours she'd mat with straw her golden hair,
 Whilst its loose tresses wanton'd in the air;
 The

The bloody vest she'd call her Albert's shroud,
 And see his ghost in ev'ry flitting cloud: 500
 Such was her hapless state, her cheek grew pale,
 The bolder lily dar'd the rose to steal;
 Her voice with frantic fervour now would tell
 Her sorrow loud, and oft the sigh would swell
 With heaving woe her breast, until despair, 505
 With starting shriek, made her clench firm her hair,
 And fling its golden tresses to the wind,
 Seeking in torture fancy'd joys to find;
 Where now the soft effulgence of that eye,
 That beam'd compassion as the wretch drew nigh? 510
 Alas how chang'd!—for hours with tears it dims,
 Or follows thro' the air the bird that skims;
 Ah me, her look awakes the mind to woe,
 Who could behold her, and the tears not flow?
 See her lov'd arms, scorning confinement's chain, 515
 Beating her breast for liberty in vain!
 Till her exhausted limbs with languor fall!
 Or cling for succour to the flinty wall!
 See her with frantic rush each stranger meet,
 And in idea bathe her Albert's feet 520
 With fastly flowing tears, then call the sigh,
 To come with ambient gales, and blow them dry.

With joy the flow'ret that in wildness grows,
 We should have pluck'd, had we ne'er seen the rose;

The

The daisy meek had been our fav'rite child, 525
 Had ne'er the jasmine flung its fragrance wild;
 Come then oh mortal on the maniac gaze;
 Come and behold Reason's expiring rays;
 See the distracted maid by virtue warm'd,
 Of its blest shield and weapons quite disarm'd; 530
 Hear her accusing voice herself arraign,
 With ev'ry vice humanity can stain;
 See her with hollow eye in terror shrink,
 Whilst her foot trembles on the summit's brink:
 Hear but the maniac's voice relate the woe 535
 Of lifeless bards, whose lines have ceas'd to flow,
 With sad propriety hear him relate,
 Each woe attendant on the maniac's fate;
 Then, when thou think'st that sense again does gleam,
 Thou hear'st with fear appal'd, his frantic scream: 540
 Oh then if thou hast felt dire hunger's fang,
 If thou hast felt ingratitude's keen pang;
 If thou hast weeping ponder'd o'er the tomb,
 That seal'd thy heart's fond pledges in their bloom,
 E'en if the prostitute close-clinging, wild, 545
 Should make thee to thy bosom clasp thy child;
 E'en then—fall on thy knees and let Heav'n's ear
 Thy pray'r of thankfulness indulgent hear,
 For hark—the chain clanks loud the maniac's doom,
 And the fierce shriek proclaims no early tomb. 550

Attentive

Attentive Nature mark'd Time's swift career,
 And winter clos'd the quick revolving year ;
 Rodolpho leaning o'er his wasted child,
 Hail'd the chill blast that whistled o'er the wild ;
 It seem'd in unison with him to mourn, 555
 It seem'd to chant the dirge o'er Agnes' urn ;
 Ah me ! sweet maid, soon will thy sorrow's end,
 Soon will the willow o'er thy ashes bend,
 Expiring Nature gives her last embrace,
 Points to the grave and shows thy resting place. 560
 In winter's reign when with industrious hand,
 Frost o'er the forest waves her mystic wand,
 Weaving her silver leaves upon each bough,
 Changing to fairy forms the fallen snow ;
 In this drear season Agnes clos'd her eyes, 565
 Nature o'ercome, scarce heav'd in broken sighs ;
 The weeping mourners round her pallid couch,
 No longer fear'd her frantic frame to touch ;
 Cold were the feet that once in airy spring,
 Would join with glee the dance in fairy ring ; 570
 Her fingers hung with livid blue ting'd deep,
 And all her sorrows wrapt in solemn sleep ;
 The film of Death obscur'd her vacant eye,
 The rustling wind proclaim'd his arrow nigh ;
 At the blest sound, once more her hands she clasp'd, 575
 The bloody vest with frantic force she grasp'd ;
 " Come friendly cloud that wraps the sickly moon,
 " Cling round this frame and tell where Albert's gone—

" See—

" See—see he comes—and beckons me away—
 " Oh waft me, Albert, to the realms of day! 580
 " He smiles—he smiles—no gaping wound I spy,
 " But Pity's dew drop trembles in his eye—
 " On me—on me it drops—my pulse is calm—
 " My poor, cold, icy heart, now feels its balm—
 " Farewel—farewel to all—a long adieu!— 585
 " I fly my love, on wings of Truth to you."

These the last words that trembled on her tongue,
 Whilst on her brow, Death's dewy vapour hung;
 His finewy arms clung round this flow'ret fair,
 And with'ring beauty drew from him a tear. 590

Oh cruel Death! why crop in playful sport
 The op'ning bud to grace thy dismal court?
 Oh cease barbarian, from experience learn
 That flow'rs tho' bright, will wither round thy urn.

Ah me! I plead in vain; with ruthless spoil, 595
 Nor youth, nor beauty, can his ravage foil;
 He crops the infant in its op'ning bloom,
 And e'en, o'er manhood firm, erects the tomb.

THE END OF THE THIRD BOOK.





BROOMHOLME PRIORY.

Book the fourth.

A R G U M E N T.

RELIGION the true support under the events of human life—Albert's convalescence—Godfrey repents his treatment of Albert—upon Albert's recovery Godfrey informs him of Agnes' death—Albert's lamentations—Albert at times happy under the influence of fancy—fancy considered as a comfort to human nature—a description of Broomholme Priory—effects of disappointment on the minds of youth—Albert's disappointment lies heavy on him—he becomes a monk—admonition to the followers of pleasure—Rodolpho goes again to the holy wars—is killed there—a change in Godfrey's disposition—Albert's death and burial—consequent reflections applied to the children of dissipation.

CAN this be human life?" the father cries,
When lost to hope he hears the dying sighs
Of his departing child,—“ Can this be life ?”
Exclaims the husband musing o'er his wife,

M

who

Who shrouded lies upon the mournful bier, 5
 Where kneeling friendship pours her fruitless tear;
 Whilst fondly to his heart he holds *that* child,
 Whose hapless birth its parent's life beguil'd:
 Alas! too true it is:—but mortal hush,
 And to thy cheek, oh call, contrition's blush; 10
 Life's thorny path may cause thy feet to bleed,
 Still trace the road, by destiny decreed;
 Tho' purling streams refuse to meet thy eye,
 And barren wastes present no hovel nigh
 When quite o'ercome thy tottering footsteps tell, 15
 That on the earth thy sinking frame must dwell;
 And when extinguish'd seem life's smother'd fires,
 And drooping Nature languidly retires;
 Raise thy full eye to Heav'n, a nymph in grey,
 Smiles in thy face and wipes the tear away; 20
 Meekly to earth, she joyful deigns to stoop,
 And bathes thy temples with the dew of Hope;
 Spite of thy tatters, feel her clasp thy form,
 Her mantle shields thee from the pelting storm;
 See on her breast she soft reclines thy head 25
 And makes her bosom thy luxurious bed;
 "Cheer, mortal, cheer;" the heav'nly being cries,
 "Religion views thee from her kindred skies;
 "Oft to this realm I come to bind the wound;
 "Of virtue, sinking friendless to the ground; 30
 "I heal the crimson gash tho' wide and deep,
 "I lull misfortune with my opiate sleep;
 "My

" My duty 'tis to cheer man's drooping frame,
 " And whisper in his ear Religion's name ;
 " When the poor seaman sinking in the main, 35
 " Calls on his wife and children dear in vain,
 " E'en then, Despair ne'er chills his beating breast,
 " He sends a pray'r to Heav'n, and sinks to rest."

Oh sweet enchantress, how my bosom glows,
 When from thy snowy breast, thou pluck'ft the rose, 40
 That lovely rose which blooms without a thorn,
 To place it next the mortal's heart forlorn ;
 'Tis thou, who bidst the flowing tear to cease,
 Who footh'ft the aching heart, and giv'ft it peace ;
 To man, mild resignation 's by thee giv'n, 45
 The sweetest comfort of indulgent Heav'n,
 And whilst thou softly footh'ft the sinking frame,
 His soul rejoices in thy hallow'd flame.

Long on the bed of sickness Albert pin'd,
 Nor knew that Agnes had her life resign'd ; 50
 Pale was his cheek, where once in sweet repose,
 Unrival'd bloom'd the glowing damask rose ;
 Dim were the rays that once with ardour bold,
 Had thro' his eyes, his heart's sensations told ;
 Languid the voice that once could honour plead, 55
 That once could tell the hero's warlike deed
 With accents loud ; alas his feeble voice
 No longer wak'd the happy to rejoice ;

M 2

But

But Health restor'd at length this fading flow'r,
 And o'er his form breath'd her ambrosial pow'r. 60
 Youth join'd with strength oft mocks the yawning grave,
 And from stern Death the drooping soul can save.

Repentant Godfrey, over Albert hung,
 His accents now no more to wrath were strung,
 Affection's sun-beams cheer'd the dreary day, 65
 And Pity's watchlight wore the night away.
 Oft on his wound would Albert pensive look,
 Pond'ring the page of mem'ry's mournful book,
 A tear too oft the characters would stain,
 And o'er the whole diffuse its tinctur'd vein; 70
 But spite of all, Health on young Albert smil'd,
 And from his cheek dispell'd the lily wild,
 On her own lips her fingers quick she prest,
 And saw reflected their vermilion guest,
 She flew delighted with the crimson dew, 75
 And sprinkled beauty's tint of rosy hue
 On Albert's cheek, where pensively had stray'd
 Each pallid flow'r that blooms beneath the glade:
 So oft when Winter with his furrow'd brow,
 Fringes the woodland with his crystal snow, 80
 With joy we view the snow-drop's pensive head,
 When first it rises from its frozen bed,
 Of all its rigours Winter it disarms,
 And stands unrival'd in its virgin charms;

The

The violet woos it as a beauteous bride, 85
 And springs in sweetest fragrance by its side,
 Their loves congenial, bribe the zephyr mild,
 To hail the primrose as their first-born child.

Godfrey one morn to Albert anxious hies,
 And smiles with joy, as Health's soft blush he spies; 90
 But still the dreadful tale, alas, must come,
 When his sad ear must learn lost Agnes' doom:
 "Arm stout thy heart, fond youth," bold Godfrey cried,
 "To drink the bitter draught of sorrow's tide;
 "Fix not thy thoughts on this terrestrial sphere, 95
 "Nor joy, nor peace, await the mortal here,
 "But to the realms beyond those azure skies,
 "Transport thy wishes, raise thy suppliant eyes;
 "Invoke the pow'r benign to soothe thy mind,
 "And let thy pray'rs implore his aid to bind 100
 "Thy wounded peace; for Agnes' fainted form,
 "Defies the tempest of the earthly storm;
 "E'en now perhaps she hears me tell the tale,
 "And sends thee comfort on the passing gale;
 "Perchance yon dove that floats upon the air, 105
 "May in her note thy Agnes' blessing bear:
 "With frantic spring she flew to snatch the cloud,
 "That wrapp'd her Albert in its silver shroud;
 "Tho' Frenzy rul'd her with despotic sway,
 "Thy name she made the herald of each day, 110
 "Thy

" Thy name she made her vesper's constant hymn,
 " Thy name she whisper'd when her eyes were dim;
 " But now, she peaceful sleeps;—her woe is o'er,
 " And Agnes thou shalt fondly clasp no more:
 " Oh Albert, rouse thy mind, let not thy grief 115
 " Refuse all comfort, and despise relief;
 " Let calm composure mark each future hour,
 " And may thy heart feel resignation's pow'r."

With start convuls'd the wretched Albert groan'd,
 And in these terms his hapless Agnes mourn'd; 120
 " Oh! art thou gone! thou suff'ring angel say,
 " Does the cold tomb enshrine thy hallow'd clay?
 " Does the pale shroud encircling wrap thy form?
 " And is thy faithful breast no longer warm?
 " Ah hapless maid! I'll seek thy mossy bed, 125
 " I'll kiss the turf that hides thy honour'd head;
 " At thy cold feet the willow sad shall mourn,
 [" And my fast-flowing tears shall fill thy urn;
 " The primrose o'er thy bosom soft shall wave,
 " And pensive snow-drops fringe thy silent grave: 130
 " I'll woo the turtle to thy hallow'd shrine,
 " Her grief shall flow in unison with mine.
 " Enthusiastic fancy paints the morn,
 " When pearls of snow had crystalized the thorn,
 " When the sad minstrels with their mournful lay 135
 " Chanted the requiem o'er thy mould'ring clay;
 " I see

" I see the throng by true affection led,
 " Pond'ring with anguish o'er thy icy bed;
 " Parental love, the magnet of the train,
 " Follows the bier, and strikes his mad'ning brain; 140
 " Friendship with smoth'ring kerchief vainly seeks,
 " To hide the tears that trickle down her cheeks;
 " And yet, oh honour'd shade, no friendly sound,
 " E'er call'd thy Albert to the hallow'd ground;
 " Bless'd had I been, if on that mournful day, 145
 " When sickness parch'd me with her fev'rish ray,
 " I could have clasp'd once more my Agnes dear,
 " And o'er her ashes shed *one* parting tear."

So spake the luckless youth, his aching heart,
 Felt to the core, affliction's keenest smart; 150
 But Time's smooth progress calms the tortur'd mind,
 His aid benign, the mental woe can bind,
 E'en when perhaps the tear with constant flow
 Seems destin'd on the moisten'd lid to grow.
 Sweet Fancy with her mild delusive pow'r 155
 Would check the anguish of the heavy hour;
 Oft would her soft enchanting pencil trace,
 The soul-subduing smile of Agnes' face;
 Paint that bewitching hour when gently stole
 Affection's dawn upon his raptur'd soul; 160
 Then in idea would he joyful see,
 The lisping cherub clinging round his knee,

Whilst

The tufted grafs would court the paffing gale
 And check its progress to the neigh'bring vale,
 In softly murm'ring sighs would gently bow,
 To breathe the elegy o'er thofe below; 220
 They fleep as found as in yon ftately tomb,
 Whofe fculptur'd marble mocks the cloifter's gloom,
 Refts pompous wealth; that once with haughty pride
 The child of want had boldly dar'd deride;
 Whilst fame in monumental pride could fwell, 225
 And on his fancied deeds of virtue dwell;
 Yet ftill fhe cannot drown the whifpers low
 That from yon aifle in hollow murmurs flow
 Whence the fad parent with expreffive eyes,
 Marks where in death his child's feducer lies. 230
 Here oft the organ caught the lift'ning ear,
 Check'd the quick ftrep, and drew the lift'ner near;
 The folemn chant would linger on the gale,
 And fill with myftic founds the diftant vale:
 Oft in thefe fared haunts would Albert walk, 235
 And liften to the friar's hallow'd talk,
 Paufe with devotion when his pensive eye,
 Caught the lov'd image of his Saviour nigh;
 With rev'rence ponder o'er the mould'ring tomb
 That fhrouded beauty in its ripeft bloom; 240
 The young enthufiaft with his lifted hand,
 On his bent knee, would view the promis'd land
 In fancy fweet, till his enraptur'd breaft,
 Long'd for thofe realms, the manfions of the bleft.

Frequent

Frequent alas, the pliant mind of youth, 245
 Shrinks on perusing the dark page of truth :
 Too oft we view in life the fav'rite plan,
 That expectation told should *bids the man*,
 By fate o'erturn'd, each fairy promise hush'd,
 And ev'ry scheme by disappointment crush'd : 250
 Does honour's voice the youthful fancy please,
 Scorning with fix'd contempt the name of ease ;
 Or bold ambition in a nation's cause,
 Urge the firm youth to plead his country's laws ;
 And should he find to damp his youthful fire, 255
 That fate denies his ardent soul's desire,
 His drooping mind o'erwhelm'd with sad despair
 Will Grief's insignia emulously wear :
 And should the fervent youth, whose steady gaze,
 Has chose some fair, from beauty's varied maze ; 260
 Should he, in fancied periods on her breast,
 Have hush'd his cares, and sooth'd himself to rest,
 Should he in fascinating Fancy's view
 Have witness'd transports, exquisite, *when true!*
 Where flocking round him, were his lisping train, 265
 With lifted finger list'ning to the strain
 Of promis'd joy, from the maternal voice,
 Who softly had their little hearts rejoice ;
 And should the fates with ruffian fury dare,
 This long-lov'd image from his soul to tear, 270
 Should they with pow'r oppressive make him steer
 Thro' scenes that mark the warrior's bold career,

And rend his heart from those domestic ties
 On which so long he'd fix'd his doating eyes;
 Then mark his fall, he sinks beneath the blow, 275
 And sighs for quiet in the grave below.

Such was the state of Albert, e'en in youth
 Too deeply read in the dark page of truth;
 On one sad theme his thoughts alone would dwell,
 On hapless Agnes, lov'd, alas too well; 280
 Oft on the margin of the sea-beat shore,
 Musing he'd wander, and his loss deplore;
 Alas the dews of night, and heats of day,
 Witness'd the wand'ring Albert on his way;
 Not e'en the whirlwind in its awful form, 285
 Could still the tumult of his mental storm.

Behold the monk's loose garb to vest his frame,
 Behold him lighted by the taper's flame
 Pacing the chilly aisles, when Angels bear
 From sorrow's falt'ring lip the midnight pray'r, 290
 The dark'ning cowl obscures his pallid face,
 Where traits of age from grief's rude hand we trace.

Such now was Albert! ye, whose bosoms glow,
 With those sensations which from pleasure flow;
 Ye, who with fond felicitude will fly, 295
 To scenes where e'er her fairy court ye spy;
 If

If in the dance she sweeps her rainbow train,
 Or sings th' enchantment of her mystic reign;
 Behold a chief of your seducing band,
 Tearing your trophies with his hallow'd hand; 300
 Convinced one chill from pale misfortune's shore,
 Condemns your airy forms to sport no more.

Meantime Rodolpho, (like the aged oak,
 On the lone heath that would the storm provoke,
 To reek its fury on its barren top, 305
 Yielding the woodman but a scanty crop)
 Traces again the crimson track of war,
 And courts the dart hurl'd from destruction's car;
 The hoary warrior scorns protection's shield
 And flies defenceless to the purple field, 310
 Provokes to dire revenge the daring foe,
 Who in his breast feels fierce resentment's glow;
 Full many a wound the aged chieftain stains,
 Till hov'ring life reluctant o'er him reigns;
 His whiten'd locks o'erspread with human gore, 315
 Would blot his crimes from Mem'ry faithful store,
 The woeful sight would make the mortal scan,
 Thro' pity's lenient eye, *the fallen man!*
 O'er the stiff corse the friend would drop a tear,
 The foe would sigh, and point to valour there. 320

A change in Godfrey's breast had now transpir'd,
 To deeds of wrath no more his soul was fir'd;

The

The mild forgiveness which from Albert's tongue
 So sweetly fell, had chaste repentance sung
 In tones enchanting on his list'ning ear, 325
 And tho' its sound awaken'd many a care
 Springing from unrepented sin; a gleam
 Of cheering hope reflected full her beam
 Upon his drooping soul, that pity's deed,
 Might in the eye of Heav'nly mercy plead 330
 Kind, to erase some portion of those crimes,
 That mark'd the record dark of former times:
 The hapless beggar now no more was driv'n
 From his wide gate, but bounty kind was giv'n;
 The truant boy, no more with quick'ning pace, 335
 Would skim the plain to shun stern Godfrey's face;
 He wip'd the tear from the poor widow's eye;
 He felt th' influence of the broken sigh.

But hark! the death-bell with its hollow tone,
 Tells that some mortal seeks the world unknown; 340
 It strikes again—and thrice it meets my ear;
 Hail grateful sound! thou tell'st contentment 's near:
 Oh curiosity! thy potent hand,
 Leads the poor pilgrim to the fun'ral band,
 And whilst to Heav'n ascends his fervent pray'r 345
 The sacred dust will not despise his tear;
 With quick'ning step he Broomholme's priory sought,
 Musing in all the luxury of thought;

The

The turf-built grave gave him a welcome feat,
 Whilst the long grass conceal'd his low retreat, 350
 Bright pearls of dew still trembled on the thorn,
 And weeping harebells mark'd the early morn;
 The care-worn wand'rer view'd death's ravage wide;
 Here slept old age—and there, the beauteous bride,
 Their simple records, told their simpler tale, 355
 Naming their race, now masters of yon vale;
 Of patience exercis'd thro' ling'ring pain;
 Of latent virtue, blotting vice's stain.
 His ruffet sleeve would frequent reach his eye
 As o'er mortality he heav'd a sigh: 360
 But see!—a length'ning train obscures the way,
 And hark—the dirge bursts forth its plaintive lay;
 The lowly bier supports the clay-cold frame,
 Whilst murm'ring voices breathe forth Albert's name;
 Alas! to yonder new-made grave it steers, 365
 Where sorrow tells its eloquence in tears:
 'The sexton skill'd in his experienc'd trade,
 Plants in the earth his sad, reluctant spade;
 With heavy heart, he muses as he stands,
 And mourns the work, Fate destines to his hands. 370
 But grief had long held undisputed reign,
 And pale disease soon join'd her pallid train,
 For many a month o'er Albert's frame she stray'd,
 Her secret wiles had blushing health betray'd;
 His wasted limbs proclaim'd the spoiler nigh, 375
 And told his coming by the filmy eye:
 One

One fatal morn the abbot's willful scan,
 With anxious eye sought Albert in his clan,
 In vain his eager eye for Albert sought,
 Man's last hard task had Albert then been taught, 380
 The arduous task—to die!—his tott'ring feet,
 Refus'd to bear him to his destin'd feat,
 On the cold pavement fell his lifeless frame,
 His dying accents whisper'd Agnes' name,
 Till struggling Nature bow'd his pallid head, 385
 And number'd Albert with the happy dead:
 'Tis *his* pale corse now seeks the silent grave;
 'Tis o'er *his* tomb the tufted grass shall wave.
 Oh child of dissipation hither come,
 For one half hour muse o'er young Albert's tomb; 390
 Ponder awhile o'er his untimely grave;
 No earthly pow'r can youth or beauty save;
 Then while ye muse, and musing, feel your eye
 With flowing sorrow scorning to be dry,
 Then while ye gaze and see the crumbling earth, 395
 Shrouding that form that once to love gave birth,
 While as with sorrowing step, ye slowly turn,
 Bestow mild pity's dew-drop on his urn,
 The consecrated pearl your mind shall calm,
 And Albert's mem'ry in your heart embalm! 400



